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### The practices of teaching first grade reading in fifteen schools of Western Montana

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THE PRACTICES OF TEACHING  
FIRST GRADE READING  
IN  
FIFTEEN SCHOOLS  
OF  
WESTERN MONTANA

A Professional Paper

by

Myron J. Loe

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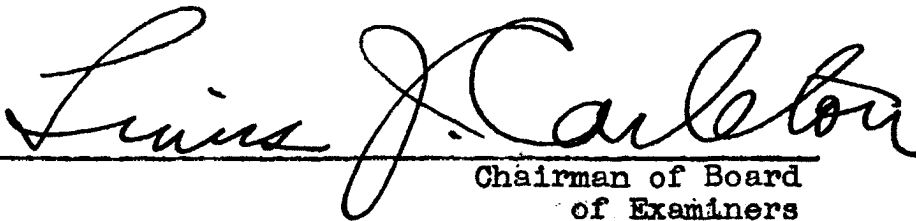
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1949

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCING THE PROBLEM

#### I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study is to ascertain, analyze, and evaluate the practices of teaching reading in a small number of public schools in Western Montana. The study concerns itself with schools from all classes of districts; with teachers, their educational philosophies, training and experiences; with children themselves, their school standings and test grades; and, most important, with the kind and quality of reading instruction offered.

Aspects of the program of reading instruction that were considered, as far as they can be reasonably covered within the framework of this limited study, include: reading readiness, motivation, the relative place of oral and silent reading, vocabulary development, comprehension, instructional materials, reading difficulties and their correction, and evaluation and promotion policies.

In brief the problem concerns itself with The Practices Of Teaching First Grade Reading In Fifteen Schools Of Western Montana.

## II. WHY THIS PROBLEM WAS SELECTED

There were a number of reasons why this study in the field of reading was made. Five years experience in the teaching field left the writer with the impression that to the first grade child reading was the biggest single challenge to be faced. Authorities in the reading field lend support to this impression.

Betts,<sup>1</sup> writing in this field, says "Grade one is the greatest failing grade, being responsible for thirty and two-tenths per cent of the failures in cities and twenty-four and one-tenth of all failures." Following this, he goes on to point out that reading was responsible for ninety-nine per cent of failures in grade one in the rural schools.

Not only is reading troublesome to the school child, but it is the only foundation on which the child's future successful school life can safely be built. This has been observed by the writer both in the role of teacher and pupil.

Gates<sup>2</sup> puts it this way:

It (reading) is most important since it is a tool the mastery of which is essential to the learning of nearly every other school subject.

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<sup>1</sup> Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (New York: Row, Peterson & Co., 1936), p. 4, citing Walter P. Percival, A Study of the Causes and Subjects of School Failure, Doctor's dissertation (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926), p. 20

<sup>2</sup> A. I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935), p. 1, cited by Ada V. Hyatt, The Place of Oral Reading in the School Program, (New York: Teacher College, Columbia University, 1943). p. 70.

Hyatt<sup>3</sup> adds, "In the modern school system, the success of the child largely depends upon his reading ability."

The importance of reading is evident in other places than the school. Reading is an important factor in everyday living. With breakfast one reads the morning paper; at lunch he looks over the menu; and upon his return home at night he reads his automobile insurance policy that just arrived in the afternoon mail. And reading in everyday life, as in the school situation, apparently leaves much to be desired. "The U. S. Census now defines "literacy" as ability to read at least at the typical fourth grade level," writes Russell,<sup>4</sup> and from time to time one hears a word on the inadequate reading ability of the American public and how popular magazines are written at the sixth grade level to adjust to that degree of comprehension of adults.

Likewise, reading is a problem in military life. Adams et al<sup>5</sup> write, "At the outset of World War II, a great number of young American men--433,000, to be specific--were rejected because they were illiterate."

The writer holds the view that reading is the most important of all the language arts and of all tools of learning in the elementary school. The great number of scientific

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> David H. Russell, "Reading and Child Development," The Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: The National Society For the Study of Education, 1949), p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 17.

studies that have been made in the reading field testify to its importance. About these studies and their findings, Gray<sup>6</sup> writes:

Scientific studies in reading problems exceeded 1200 from 1925 up to this Second Report--twice the number reported during the proceeding century. Findings of these studies include:

1. A surprisingly large percentage of pupils encounter serious difficulty in reading, especially in upper grades and high school.

2. A systematic method of teaching beginning reading is more effective in promoting the development of basic reading habits than incidental or opportunistic methods.

3. One-third to two-fifths of the U. S. A. adult population is unable to read, with ease and understanding material of sixth grade difficulty.

4. Progress has been made in determining factors that make for difficult reading.

5. Experiments show improved reading teaching assures distinct progress in reading abilities, understanding, and habits of pupils in content fields.

Obviously, then, reading is of prime importance. But why was first grade reading especially singled out? First, it is impossible to cover the whole field. Second, it is in the first grade that the foundation for effective reading is laid. Third, the technique of teaching and learning reading at any age or grade level is basically the same as in the first grade. Fourth, the teaching of beginning reading is similar to the teaching of remedial reading except that the latter is highly personalized.

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<sup>6</sup> William S. Gray, "A Decade of Progress," The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co., 1937), p. 14-17.

### III. THE PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

As the title implies, the problem was to observe and record the actual practices in reading instruction as they existed in the fifteen schools selected for study. The value of such study would be to detect obvious weaknesses and thereby make possible the recharting of the course in reading instruction. Certainly, the exact status of reading instruction as it today exists must be known before a new, corrected course can be determined, and that was the main reason that this problem was undertaken.

The reading instruction observed in the fifteen schools has been checked against the practices accepted by recognized authorities in the field of elementary reading. From such comparative study it was hoped that what is now done in reading may be brought closer to what is known to be desirable.

The classroom teacher is the one, and the only one, who can activate the practices proposed by the reading experts. Therefore, it is the sincere hope of the writer that this report will be read by the sixteen teachers interviewed in this problem. The degree to which practice is brought into alignment with accepted theory of reading instruction may considerably affect the adequacy of the schools studied.

### IV. HOW THIS PROBLEM WAS APPROACHED

The writer believes that one of the best ways to learn how a thing is done any place is to go to that place and see the situation first hand. That is exactly what was done.

Fifteen representative schools were selected for the survey. These schools were situated in five different counties one hundred twenty-five miles separating the two most distant schools.

The survey was made up of two elements. First, it included a personal interview which was based on a prepared questionnaire (See Appendix A). The purpose of this interview-questionnaire was to secure data on: (1) the school, the teacher, and the pupils (Part A); (2) the teachers' viewpoints on important aspects of reading (Part B); and (3) on many phases of the teaching of first grade reading (Part C). Second, it included a primary reading test (See Appendix B) that was given to the two hundred sixty-two first grade children of the fifteen schools.

The fifteen schools utilized in this survey were selected so as to get a sampling of schools maintained by the three classes of school districts in Montana. At this point it may be well to identify and explain the three different classes of school districts in Montana. To do this, quotations will be taken directly from the Montana Educational Directory:

A First Class District<sup>7</sup> is one which has a population of eight thousand or more; it employs a superintendent who has had at least five years experience in public school work; it is controlled by a board of seven trustees.

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<sup>7</sup> Montana Educational Directory, 1948-1949, (Helena, Montana: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1948), p. 5.

A Second Class District<sup>8</sup> is one which has a population of one thousand or more and less than eight thousand; it employs a superintendent who has had at least three years experience in public school work; it is controlled by a board of five members.

A Third Class District<sup>9</sup> is one with a population of less than one thousand and is controlled by a board of three members. A third class district employing more than one teacher may employ a superintendent or principal or both. The one and two room rural schools of which there are nearly two thousand with an enrollment of approximately twenty thousand are under the supervision of the county superintendent and are not included here.

Three of these schools were from a first class district, a district maintaining nearly a dozen separate elementary school units. In this study, these three schools are indicated as 1A, 1B, and 1C. The "1" indicates a school maintained by a first class school district; the letters refer to the individual schools.

Likewise, schools designated 2A, 2B, and 2C represent the three second class district schools that were used in this study. Again, the "2" points out the class district; the letter, the particular school of that class district.

Schools labeled 3A, 3B, and 3C are, of course, the three schools of third class districts that were interviewed and tested. Besides these three, there were six other one or two room elementary schools of third class districts. These are identified as 3vA, 3vB and 3rA, 3rB, 3rC, 3rD. The symbol "v" included in the code name designates that it is a third class district elementary school located within a village; the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 11.



"r" indicates that such are rural schools out in the open country. All six of these village and rural elementary schools were classified as "Superior" schools and are all under the supervision of the county superintendent of schools. A school is declared "Superior" when it has complied with a series of specification and requirements established by the State Department of Public Instruction.

Teachers throughout this paper, will be identified in the same manner as the schools, that is, Teacher 1A teaches at school 1A, a first class district school. Similarly, Teacher 3rD is the instructor at school 3rD, one of the four third class elementary rural schools out in the open country.

#### V. PLAN FOR REPORTING AND ANALYZING DATA

Data compiled from the sources mentioned above are broken down for treatment as follows:

Principles and Word Analysis ing Program Curriculum	Chapter	II	Facts Pertaining to the Problem
	Chapter	III	The Reading Program: Practice and
	Chapter	IV	Reading Readiness
	Chapter	V	Vocabulary: Word Recognition, Phonics,
	Chapter	VI	Comprehension and the Oral-Silent Read-
	Chapter	VII	Reading Materials and Supplies
	Chapter	VIII	Reading, The Other Language Arts, and
	Chapter	IX	Reading Difficulties and Correction
	Chapter	X	Evaluations and Promotion Policies

Each of the chapters from III to X inclusive will receive treatment that will be approximately similar.

Chapter XI, the last one, summarizes this paper and makes recommendations for the teaching of first grade reading.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHILDREN, THE TEACHERS, AND THE SCHOOLS

To supply a broader background for this problem, and hence better understanding, additional supplementary data are provided. This material is related to three aspects of the question: the child, the teacher, and the school; and it is developed in the following order:

- I. The Children Tested
- II. The Teachers Interviewed
- III. The Schools Surveyed

#### I. THE CHILDREN TESTED

Table I (page 11) gives a comparative picture as to how the fifteen Western Montana Schools stand on the Reilley Primary Reading Test. Taken as a whole, these Montana schools have a median of 45.0 which does not vary significantly from the Reilley Test Norm of 44.8. In breaking down this total score, it is found that the Montana schools ~~exceed the~~ Reilley Test Norm in word recognition and word meaning, but nearly all gain enjoyed in the first two parts was exhausted by the deficiency evidenced in sentence meaning and still more in paragraph meaning. In short, the main conclusion to be drawn within the limitations of this test is that the Western Montana schools examined in this study appear to teach vocabulary more or less satisfactorily but fall short of the mark in comprehension.

The reader is urged to read the Teacher's Manual for the Reilley Primary Reading Test, as well as to look over the test itself (see Appendix B, page xiv and on). From this Teacher's Manual, under the heading of "Norms," on page xiv, is written: "The norms for this test are based upon the returns from 1451 first grade pupils. Schools in fifteen states, selected so as to get a sampling from the major sections and types of communities in the United States, are represented in the norms below." It is suggested that 1451 first grade pupils may be a somewhat limited number upon which to base the Reilley test norm. Likewise, the reader is not given much help when he is told that the samplings are drawn so as to get a representative picture of the "major sections and types of communities in the United States." Finally, the samplings were made within fifteen states only. The reader does not know which states, and he must take on faith the claim that these states are representative of the whole country. These facts are merely brought to the reader's attention in order to prevent him from placing too much stock in the test results as reported.

The reader is urged to remember at all times that summaries and conclusions submitted pertain only to the fifteen schools included in the survey and do not necessarily reflect or purport to reflect the situation throughout Montana, Western Montana, or any part of Western Montana.

For purposes of this study, the two hundred sixty-two children tested, including one hundred twenty-six girls and one hundred thirty-six boys, have been divided into three categories, namely, Group I, Group II, and Group III. Those children who scored a grade equivalent of 2.9 or higher are regarded as Group I. Group II includes all children rating grade equivalents of 1.9 to 2.8 inclusive. Grade equivalents of 1.8 or lower are classified as Group III. No data as to the children's background were available, and this study was based on the premise that all were normal children, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Table II (page 12) indicates that nineteen children scored a grade of 2.9 or higher. This group of advanced readers included three times as many girls as boys. As far as reading ability was concerned, if one's educational philosophy were such that it would condone such action, these nineteen children could have been accelerated a grade. Table II further reveals that eighty-one children (26 girls and 55 boys) fall into the 1.8 or lower category, indicating that they are, as far as reading is concerned, either marginal or seriously retarded.

Table III (page 13) reveals that these children who

TABLE I  
THE SCHOOL MEDIANS  
OF RAW SCORES, BY PARTS AND TOTALS  
FOR THE  
REILLEY PRIMARY READING TEST

SCHOOL	PART I WORD RECOG- NITION	PART II WORD MEANING	PART III SENTENCE MEANING	PART IV PARAGRAPH MEANING	TOTAL RAW SCORE MEDIAN
Possible Score	20.0	20.0	10.0	10.0	60.0
1A	19.0	17.5	8.0	3.5	48.0
1B	19.0	17.0	10.0	6.0	52.0
1C	17.0	15.0	8.5	4.5	45.0
2A	19.0	17.0	9.0	5.0	50.0
2B-a	19.0	17.5	9.0	5.5	51.0
2B-b	15.0	10.5	7.0	4.0	36.5
2C	17.0	14.0	8.0	4.0	43.0
3A	17.5	14.0	9.0	3.0	43.5
3B	13.0	11.0	8.0	3.0	35.0
3C	15.5	12.5	6.0	2.5	36.5
3vA	18.0	16.0	8.0	1.0	43.0
3vB	18.5	15.0	8.5	5.5	47.5
3rA	18.0	14.0	9.5	5.0	46.5
3rB	20.0	18.0	8.5	4.0	50.5
3rC	18.0	16.0	8.0	6.0	48.0
3rD	16.0	14.0	7.5	3.0	40.5
Median of 15 Schools	18.0	15.0	8.0	4.0	45.0
Reilley Test Norm	17.5	14.5	8.2	4.6	44.8

TABLE II

BREAKDOWN OF BOYS' AND GIRLS' READING ABILITY  
BY GRADE EQUIVALENTS  
ON BASIS OF  
REILLEY PRIMARY READING TEST

SCHOOL	CHILDREN TESTED			CHILDREN SCORING 2.9 OR HIGHER			CHILDREN SCORING 1.8 OR LOWER		
	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS
1A	26	11	15	2	1	1	7	1	6
1B	27	12	15	7	6	1	7	0	1
1C	26	16	10	1	1	0	7	4	3
2A	17	5	12	0	0	0	4	0	4
2B-a	27	17	10	3	2	1	3	2	1
2B-b	26	13	13	1	1	0	17	6	11
2C	45	17	28	2	2	0	18	4	14
3A	23	12	11	0	0	0	7	3	4
3B	9	3	6	0	0	0	7	2	5
3C	14	7	7	0	0	0	7	3	4
3vA	5	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	1
3vB	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rA	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rB	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
3rC	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rD	4	3	1	1	1	0	2	1	1
Totals	262	126	136	19	16	5	81	26	55

TABLE III

RELATIVE STANDING OF CHILDREN  
IN TERMS OF GRADE EQUIVALENTS  
IN READING ABILITY  
ACCORDING TO  
REILLEY PRIMARY READING TEST

CLASS SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL BY CLASS DIST- RICT NO.	GROUP I		GROUP II		GROUP III	
		GRADE EQUIVALENTS, 2.9 OR HIGHER		GRADE EQUIVALENTS, 1.9 TO 2.8 (INCLUSIVE)		GRADE EQUIVALENTS, 1.8 OR LOWER	
		NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
3d (12yr)	46	0	00.0	25	54.3	21	45.7
3d (v-8yr)	9	1	11.1	7	77.8	1	11.1
3d (r-8yr)	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>15.4</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>69.2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>15.4</u>
Total, Third	68	3	4.4	41	60.3	24	35.3
Second	115	6	5.2	67	58.3	42	36.5
First	79	10	12.6	54	68.4	15	19.0
Total, All Classes	262	19	7.3	162	61.8	81	30.9

scored 1.8 or lower in reading constitute 30.9 per cent of the whole group tested. One hundred sixty-two children, or 61.8 per cent, are in this study classified as Satisfactory, having rated grade equivalents of 1.9 to 2.8 inclusive. The nineteen children classified as Advanced represent 7.3 per cent of the total tested.

In checking classes of school districts one against the others, it was revealed that the First Class District placed 12.6 per cent of their pupils in Group I, 68.4 per cent of them in Group II, and only 19.0 per cent of them in Group III.

The pupils from Second Class Schools placed only 5.2 per cent in Group I and 36.5 per cent (over one-third) in Group III.

When the Third Class District total is broken down, it is found that an even more critical situation exists within the twelve year systems that maintain their own administration. In this group 45.7 per cent of the first graders fall into the Group III. With a situation like this overwhelming the school children already by the close of the first grade, is there not a chance that they may have scholastic difficulty when they reach the seventh or eighth grade or high school--if they get there at all?

An interesting observation is that the third class rural schools of this survey measured up satisfactorily: 15.4 per cent of their children qualified for Group I, and 15.4 per cent were included in Group III. Likewise, the third class village eight-grade school systems measured up favorably. If nothing else,



TABLE IV

BREAKDOWN OF GRADE EQUIVALENTS OF 1.8 OR LOWER  
INTO MARGINAL AND CRITICALLY RETARDED READERS  
ON BASIS OF  
REILLEY PRIMARY READING TEST

SCHOOL	CHILDREN SCORING 1.8 OR LOWER			MARGINAL READERS 1.8 TO 1.6 INCLUSIVE			CRITICALLY RETARDED 1.5 TO 1.0 INCLUSIVE		
	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL	GIRLS	BOYS
1A	7	1	6	3	0	3	4	1	3
1B	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
1C	7	4	3	4	4	0	3	0	3
2A	4	0	4	3	0	3	1	0	1
2B-a	3	2	1	1	1	0	2	1	1
2B-b	17	6	11	6	2	4	11	4	7
2C	18	4	14	7	1	6	11	3	8
3A	7	3	4	3	0	3	4	3	1
3B	7	2	5	3	0	3	4	2	2
3C	7	3	4	1	0	1	6	3	3
3vA	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
3vB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3rD	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Totals	81	26	55	33	9	24	48	17	31

this tends to disprove that rural education must necessarily be bad. It may suggest the benefit of having a small number with which to work in teaching beginning reading. It must be a credit to the rural teachers to keep reading at this pitch of achievement in face of the one hundred one other demands upon their time and resources.

The visitations to the fifteen schools concerned in this survey were all made during the ninth and last month of school.

In Table IV (page 15), Group III is further refined by dividing the graduation of 1.8 or lower into two smaller groupings: the Marginal Readers (1.8 to 1.6 inclusive) and the Critically Retarded (1.5 to 1.0 inclusive). By so doing it is found that thirty-three of these eighty-one Group III readers are then raised to the status of Marginal, and forty-eight are lowered to the position of Critically Retarded. This latter group contains nearly twice as many boys as girls. This means that forty-eight of the two hundred sixty-two children in the sixteen reading classes interviewed just are not learning how to read satisfactorily. In other words, 18.3 per cent of the first graders in their ninth month of reading instruction are critically retarded and, in this case, over one-half of them were destined to be retained in the first grade for another year.

The hypothesis started out with in this paper, that first grade reading is a major educational problem, apparently has more than a theoretical basis. In this research ample evidence was found to give the view substance. Since the child

is the most important factor in the school equation, and since reading is such a vital tool to him, the solution to this vexing situation is much more than an academic thought provoker.

## II. THE TEACHERS INTERVIEWED

All of the teachers interviewed were women. Eleven of them were married, and five were single. Thirteen of them were from "out of state;" three, native Montanans. As far as academic training above high school was concerned, three received their training within Montana; six wholly outside of this state; and seven, partly in Montana and partly out-of-state. Only one (Teacher 2A) had a four year college degree. As far as certification was concerned, seven held Montana Life Certificates and six had Elementary Certificates; two were teaching with Temporary Certificates and one on a Permit.

All in all, the group had had considerable experience. Three had taught school for more than twenty years; seven, more than ten years; four, over five years; and only two, less than five years. None were members of teachers' unions while all but three (2B-a, 2B-b, and 3rC) were members of both the Montana and National Education Associations.

Teacher 2C (with forty-six children) had a part-time assistant. This assistant divided her time between the first and second grade rooms.

Teacher 3rA also had a part-time assistant. This aide used the adjoining room in this modern rural school and so,

TABLE V  
TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE  
OF THE  
SIXTEEN TEACHERS  
INTERVIEWED

TEACHER AND/OR SCHOOL	YEARS TRAINING OVER		MONTANA CERTIFI- CATION	PROFESSIONAL- TRAINING (QUARTER- HOURS)					YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE	
	HIGH SCHOOL	DEGREE HELD		C	P <sup>1</sup>	E	P <sup>2</sup>	R		M <sup>3</sup>
1A	3	None	Elementary	4		3		8		14
1B	2	None	Life	8		4		4		6
1C	2	None	Elementary <sup>4</sup>	0		4		2		5
2A	4	B.S.(Ed)	Life	4 $\frac{1}{2}$		9		0		10
2B-a	3	None	Elementary	4		4		4		12
2B-b	2	None	Elementary	3		3		3		1
2C	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	None	Life	4		0		7		25
3A	2	None	Permit	0		0		2		8
3B	2	None	Elementary	4		4		4		21
3C	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	None	Elementary	4		0		4		6
3vA	2	None	Elementary	4		0		4		4
3vB	3	None	Life	4		4		8		10 $\frac{1}{2}$
3rA	3	None	Life	4		2		4		17
3rB	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	None	Life	0		4		4		18
3rC	3	None	Life	4		4		4		26
3rD	3	None	Elementary	4		4		0		11

- 1 Child Psychology  
2 Educational Psychology  
3 Reading Methods  
4 Temporary

for practical purposes, this one room rural school was converted into a part-time two-room rural school.

Table V (page 18) shows that eight teachers each taught only the first grade. Two teachers had both the first and second, another had the three primary grades, and a fourth taught the first four grades. While it is possible that a rural teacher can teach all grades, none of the rural teachers involved in this study did so. One taught seven grades, and three had six.

School 2B had two first grade rooms and two teachers, herein designated as 2B-a and 2B-b. Both of these were included in this survey. It is for this reason that there are listed in this paper sixteen teachers, sixteen rooms, but only fifteen schools.

### III. THE SCHOOLS SURVEYED

School 1B had four first grade rooms, but only one of these was utilized in this survey. School 1B conducted a Metropolitan Achievement Test, and Room 1B (see Table VII) (page 22) scored a median of 2.9. To learn the relative standing of these four rooms of School 1B and to erase any question that room 1B may be an especially groomed showroom of child proteges in reading, inquiries were made into the relative status of the other three rooms of this School 1B. What were the medians established by these rooms in the Metropolitan? What about the enrollment, the kindergarten background? The answers to these questions were compiled and are presented in Table Va.

TABLE Va  
RELATIVE STATUS OF KINDERGARTEN TRAINING  
AND METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST  
STANDING

SCHOOL 1B  
THE FOUR FIRST GRADE ROOMS

Room	Children	Kindergarten*		Metropolitan (March 1949) Median
		Yes	No	
1 (1B)	30	27	3	2.9
2	30	11	15	2.2
3	30	10	20	2.4
4	30	17	7	3.3

\* The kindergarten background of ten children, in rooms 2 and 4, was unknown when inquiry was made.

Accordingly, the room tested at School 1B (Room Number 1 in Table Va) was about as representative as was possible. It was neither the highest nor the lowest achiever according to the Metropolitan Test.

School 3vA was a two-room eight grade school. Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 were taught in the lower room.

School 3vB was a one-room eight grade school, but there were only three grades in attendance: 1, 2, and 3.

School 3rA was a two-room school, both rooms being used during the half-day when the part-time teacher was present.

All Third Class eight-grade schools, both village and

TABLE VI

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS PERTAINING TO  
THE FIFTEEN SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SURVEY  
BY  
SCHOOL, CLASS DISTRICT, AND TOTAL

SCHOOL	GRADE TAUGHT IN ROOM	PUPILS IN ROOM	PUPILS PRESENT AND TESTED	GIRLS	BOYS	DAYS IN 1948-49 SCHOOL-
3A	1	28	23	12	11	180
3B	1 & 2	—	9	3	6	180
3C	1 & 2	—	14	7	7	175
Total, 3d, 12yr			46	22	24	
3vA	1,2,3,&4	10	5	2	3	180
3vB	1,2,&3	7	4	3	1	180
Total, 3d 8yr, village			9	5	4	
3rA	All but 2&3	18	4	2	2	180
3rB	All but 4&6	10	2	1	1	180
3rC	All but 4&8	11	3	1	2	180
3rD	All but 3	26	4	3	1	180
Total, 3d 8yr, rural			13	7	6	
Total, Third Class Districts			68	34	34	
2A	1	17	17	5	12	176
2B-a	1	29	27	17	10	176
2B-b	1	28	26	13	13	176
2C	1	46	45	17	28	180
Total, Second Class Districts			115	52	63	
1A	1 <sup>1</sup>	36	26	11	15	190
1B	1 <sup>1</sup>	30	27	12	15	190
1C	1	29	26	16	10	190
Total, First Class Districts			79	39	40	
Total, All Classes			262	125	137	

1 Actually there were four first-grade rooms in school 1B, but only one of these four rooms was tested.

TABLE VII

A COMPARATIVE STUDY  
OF ACHIEVEMENT TESTS  
SPONSORED BY THE SCHOOL TESTING PROGRAM  
AND THE REILLEY PRIMARY READING TEST

SCHOOL	SCHOOL SPONSORED TEST PROGRAM			REILLEY READING TEST			
	READING- ACHIEVEMENT TEST	MONTH TEST GIVEN	MEDIAN	DATE HELD	MEDIAN		
					CLASS	GIRLS	BOYS
1A	Metropolitan	March	2.2	Apr. 25	2.25	2.5	2.1
1B	Metropolitan	March	2.9	Apr. 26	2.7	2.85	2.5
1C	Metropolitan	March	2.0	May 2	2.2	2.15	2.2
2A	Metropolitan	March	2.45	Apr. 29	2.6	2.7	2.5
2B-a	Unit Scales of Attainment	April	3.55	May 20	2.7	2.7	2.3
2B-b	Unit Scales of Attainment	April	1.6	May 20	1.6	2.2	1.4
2C	Metropolitan	May	2.5	May 6	1.9	2.3	1.85
3A	Metropolitan	May	2.4	May 16	2.05	2.1	1.9
3B	(None given)			Apr. 28	1.6	1.4	1.6
3C	Coordinated Scales of Attainment	April	1.65	May 3	1.9	2.0	1.8
3vA	(None given)			May 10	2.0	2.6	1.9
3vB	Coordinated Scales of Attainment	April	2.15	May 12	2.35	2.3	2.4
3rA	Coordinated Scales of Attainment	March	2.4	May 9	2.3	2.55	2.1
3rB	Coordinated Scales of Attainment	May	1.7	May 11	2.6	2.9	2.3
3rC	Coordinated Scales of Attainment	April	2.2	May 12	2.6	2.6	2.35
3rD	Metropolitan	April	2.5	May 4	1.8	2.0	1.2

Note: Achievement tests given as a part of the individual school's testing program were not a part of this study and were in no way subject to a common control. Since the data were available, they were reported for whatever they may be worth.



rural, were rated "Superior."

Of the schools surveyed, only one had given a mental ability test. Three schools had a reading readiness test set up as part of their regular testing program, although several used one or other reading readiness test where admission of under-aged children was contemplated. Thirteen schools gave an achievement test, and the medians given for these tests (in Table VII, page 22) are based on reading achievement only and not reading and numbers.

With two exceptions (3B and 3vB), the girls established higher medians in the Reilley Primary Reading Test than the boys in the sixteen rooms tested. Likewise, there were fifty-five as compared to twenty-six girls included in the number of children who scored a grade equivalent of 1.8 or below (see Table II, page 12). This situation is in line with the generally accepted view of students of education that boys run a poor second to girls in the first years of elementary elementary school. In this connection, Betts<sup>1</sup> writes:

Among individuals with language difficulties there is a preponderance of boys. From three to four times as many boys as girls are found to stutter. Caswell found in all the cities he studied a higher percentage of failures among girls...Stoddard and Wellman concluded:

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<sup>1</sup> Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties, (New York: Row, Peterson and Co., 1936), p. 4, citing Hollis L. Caswell, "Non-Promotion in Elementary Schools," x-100, Division of Surveys and Field Studies, No. 4, (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1933), p. 18; George D. Stoddard and Beth L. Wellman, Child Psychology, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), p. 156; and Fowler D. Brooks, The Applied Psychology of Reading, (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1926), p. 22.

"At the preschool ages the girls are clearly in advance of the boys on present day development scales." Brooks states: "In oral reading girls do better than boys in all elementary grades. There is some evidence to show that girls are promoted on lower standards of achievement. Other data, not yet conclusive, indicates that boys mature more slowly than girls..."

## CHAPTER III

### THE READING PROGRAM: PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES

#### 1. THEORETICAL READING FOUNDATIONS

Before going into the practices of reading instruction used at the fifteen schools of this survey, and the philosophies of reading instruction of the sixteen teachers, the views of the ranking authorities on the question of reading will be reviewed briefly. This is felt to be not only excusable but worth-while because of the importance of theory in the principles and goals of first grade reading.

First, what is reading? Acting as spokesman for the Committee on Reading, Gates<sup>1</sup> writes:

Reading is not a simple mechanical skill; nor is it a narrow scholastic tool. Properly cultivated, it is essentially a thoughtful process. However, to say that reading is a "thought-getting" process is to give it too restricted description. It should be developed as a complex organization of patterns of higher mental processes. It can and should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning, and problem-solving. Indeed, it is believed that reading is one of the best media for cultivating many techniques of thinking and imagining. The reading program should, therefore, make careful provision for contributing as fully as possible to the cultivation of a whole array of techniques involved in understanding, thinking, reflecting, imagining, judging, evaluating, analyzing, and reasoning.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur I. Gates, "Character and Purpose of the Yearbook," The Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), pp. 3-4.

Another way of emphasizing the broad conception of reading that underlies this yearbook is to stress reading for use. The reading act is completed or nears completion as the child uses his reading in some practical way. He goes through steps of perception, understanding, and thinking in order that his reading may be put to work. Sometimes the content give him facts he can use in report; sometimes, directions for his construction activities; sometimes, material to be remembered or laughed over. But in every case the reading act includes application....

Furthermore, reading is not to be regarded as limited to mental activities. The dynamic and emotional processes are also involved. In whole-hearted reading activity the child does more than understand and contemplate; his emotions are stirred; his attitudes and purposes are modified; indeed, his innermost being is involved. That an individual's personality may be deeply affected by his reading is a basic assumption of the emerging practice of bibliotherapy--the treatment of personality maladjustment by means of reading and reflecting upon carefully selected materials. The reading program should, therefore, make provision for exerting an influence upon the development of the most wholesome dynamic and emotional adjustments.

How then is reading learned? What are the stages of reading learning? Hildreth<sup>2</sup> states that primary reading progresses through several stages somewhat as follows:

1. Preparation for learning to read through experience in and out of school that broadens the child's background and contributes to his maturity for learning with understanding.
2. Introduction to reading through experiences which help the pupils to learn associations between printed words and their graphic symbols, to respond with understanding to simple printed context, and to distinguish among word symbols and retain them in memory.
3. Extension of reading skill through improvement in word recognition, enlargement of meaning vocabulary, improvement of comprehension, smoother oral reading, and concentration on longer selections.

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<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Program in the Early Primary Period," The Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), p. 54.

4. Rapid growth in the independent use of reading materials, absorption in easy books, enjoyment in reading for one's self, improved ability in using reading for study purposes, and increased ability to make suitable choices of reading materials.

All of these stages overlap...

How can reading instruction be most advantageously presented? Gray,<sup>3</sup> speaking for the Committee on Reading, reports the following recommendations for reading instruction.

1. Reading instruction should increase in breadth and efficiency.
2. Modern life gives reading aims greater significance.
3. Greater efficiency in reading is necessary, ...
4. Need greater quality and quantity of appealing reading material.
5. Teacher planning and guidance are needed to make reading a component part of a unified program rather than an isolated activity. It must be regarded as a phase of child development rather than an end in itself.
6. Set up specific periods for guidance in reading throughout elementary, secondary, and college periods.
7. Teacher of every curriculum field is recognized as a teacher of reading.
8. Stimulating purpose, motivating drive, rapid progress, optimal achievement.
9. Stress independent reading. Elevate standards and tastes in material read.
10. School and classroom library with generous supply of attractive, suitable books.
11. Adapt instruction to capacities, interests, and needs of pupils. Non-promotions merely because of difficulty in reading can no longer be defended.
12. Permanent records of attainment, diagnosis, correction, and remedial reading. Do not call the remedial class "remedial."

## II. ACTUAL PRACTICES USED IN THE FIELD

What do the first grade teachers interviewed believe should be accomplished in first grade reading? What is done to

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<sup>3</sup> William S. Gray, "A Decade of Progress," The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1, (Bloomington, Illinois; Public School Publishing Company, 1937, pp. 17-21.

motivate the child? To what extent is the Montana State Course of Study used? These and other questions were answered by the teachers who were right on the classroom scene. Teachers' views and opinions as to practices and methods as expressed in answer to the interview questions appear to be more or less common to the whole group. That is, the views of the rural teachers agreed more often than not with those of the teachers from village, town, and city schools. Evidences of divergent views were as prevalent between teachers within any class district as they were between teachers of the three classes. Wherever there were marked deviations between teachers' views of one class school as compared to others, these differences are presented for the reader's enlightenment.

#### The Montana State Course of Study

In answer to the question, "Do you use the Montana State Course of Study?," seven teachers answered "in full." The other nine said "in part." All first class district in the teacher interviewed used the course of study in part. Each of these teachers made a qualifying statement. Said teacher 1A, "We use the course of study when we can. We use our local system's course of study for music and physical education." Teacher 1B said that she used the state course and "school regulations, too." Teacher 1C, while using the course in part, emphatically stated that she taught "children rather than the course of study."

Three of the four teachers of the second class schools

reported that they used the state course in full. "It has to be used to get over all of the material called for," said teacher 2A. Teacher 2B-b added that she used the course of study for suggestions as well as to watch for requirements. Three of the four third class rural teachers used the course in part. One of these said that it was used as an aid--a guide. Another said that standards were watched for. The third declared that time did not permit coverage of all, and she used the teacher's manual which accompanied the basic reading text used.

### Types of Reading Emphasized

"In your reading program," it was asked, "what is the one, two, three order of emphasis or evaluation as to the importance of the following types of reading: (a) work type (information and skills), (b) pleasure type (recreational), (c) remedial type (corrective)?" In response, ten teachers placed them: work, pleasure, and remedial. Three teachers had them placed: pleasure, work, and remedial. Two other, rural teachers, put down: work, remedial, and pleasure. The sixteenth teacher, 3A, placed remedial first, with work and pleasure following in that order. This teacher had considerable trouble with absenteeism, and this fact might well explain her emphasis on remedial work.

Teacher 1A, who ranked the items in the order: work, pleasure, and remedial, had her reading so organized that she attended to the work type in the forenoon and the pleasure type in the afternoon. She reported a need for more remedial work as the year progressed. Teacher 1B, whose room established

the highest median in the Reilley Primary Reading Test used in this survey, stated that not much remedial work was done. Teacher 2A said that all three types were closely connected and could not be separated; and Teacher 3B, who had ranked them: work, pleasure, remedial, insisted that reading skill must come first.

Before leaving this problem, the identifications of work-type and recreational reading as put forth by Gray<sup>4</sup> have been restated so that the meaning of each will be clear to all:

Our work-type of reading is associated with the demands of our vocations, civic duties, and other phases of daily life. It is directed by relatively conscious and practical purposes. Most lessons in history and civics, geography and other sciences, mathematics, and language require this kind of reading.

Recreational reading is associated with the wholesome enjoyment of leisure time. We often seek enjoyment and rest through getting away from reality. Children's engrossment in fairy tales and tales of wonderland and nonsense is an example of this enjoyable kind of recreational reading. It is wholesome and harmless for all of us so long as it is not taken for reality.

### "Reading Ahead" in the Reader

Is the child permitted to "read ahead" in his reader? In answer to this question, six of the sixteen teachers interviewed permitted the children to read ahead in their readers. Six other prohibited it, while another one discouraged it. Two teachers took no stand on the issue one way or the other, one of them saying that the bright children would read ahead anyhow and the slow ones would not bother. Teacher 3A encouraged reading ahead, stating, "Let them read all they want."

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., "The Nature and Types of Reading," pp. 31-32.



Two teachers stressed the undesirability of beginning (first half-year) readers going ahead. Teacher 2B-a said that it spoiled the interest, and Teacher 2A said that there was no need for her children reading ahead because they always had another book in which to read if they so desired. Teacher 3vB, who prohibited, acknowledged that "children do look ahead." It is of interest to note that all four rural teachers permitted their first graders to read ahead.

### Study Units

Fifteen teachers used study-units in connection with their reading work. Teacher 3vB led the field in number with thirteen units worked. She admitted, however, that some of these units were simple, "...but still are units." At the other extreme was teacher 3rD who had not worked out one unit. Said Teacher 3rD, "Time hasn't permitted; I have the basic fundamentals to attend to." Four teachers each worked six study units; three teachers, four units each; two teachers, three each; and one teacher for each of nine, eight, and seven units.

Topics that proved to be the most popular for use in these study units were pets, eleven times used; the circus, nine; birds, eight; the farm and toys, six each; the home, five; friends, and manners, four each; the zoo, three. Teacher 1C used the text as the basis for her study-units. Teacher 2C said that a large group discouraged extensive use of units. Other themes for study-units included: the post-office, safety, health, seasons, holidays, peoples.

### Motivation and Materials

The materials selected for use in the teaching of first grade reading are an important factor in developing the child's interest in reading. Reed,<sup>5</sup> discussing the question of motivation and materials, writes as follows:

Learning to read may be motivated by appeal to such motives as inventiveness, curiosity, mastery, rivalry, the desire for approval, and desire for action. After the child has learned to read, there is no motive, either native or acquired, to which an appeal may not be made in reading. Probably the most effective method of motivating reading is to select materials that appeal to the reader's interest.

The qualities and features in reading that children in primary grades admire most are surprise, liveliness, dramatic action, animalness, conversation, humor, and plot... Boys like dramatic action, adventure, mystery, rapid action. Girls like comforting arts, kindness, faithfulness, unselfishness, love, gay clothes, social esteem, and social position.

A permanent interest in reading should be instilled in each child. Selection of material read can do much toward this. Selection can be used to assure rapid learning, increased effort, good comprehension, and enjoyment.

The disadvantage of selecting reading materials entirely with reference to children's interests is that it ignores most of the serious objectives of reading, those involved in the activity of reading to learn. It may thus hinder rather than help the child's adjustments to reality.

The chief function of interest is that it makes reading palatable; after that requirement has been satisfied, other objectives should be determining factors.

The teachers interviewed all recognized the importance of materials read, and the interrelationship between subject and interest. In reply to the query, "In the teaching of reading,

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<sup>5</sup> Homer B. Reed, Psychology of Elementary School Subjects, (Chicago: Ginn and Company, 1938), pp. 127-128.

what is the relationship of boy and girl interest and appeal in subject matter?", four teachers reported that boy and girl interests were identical; ten teachers said their interests were partially (and perhaps largely) similar; and two stated their interests were different.

Girls' first interests in reading materials were reported to be: animal pets, five times; family and home life, four times; dolls, twice; play, nature, toys, and fairy tales, one each. The first interests of boys according to these teachers were: animal pets, nine times favorite; airplanes, two; family and home, play, nature, and fairy tales, one time each.

Materials, however, were only one of a number of motivating factors in reading instruction. All sixteen teachers felt, however, that children either were interested in reading, or they were not. If they had this inner drive, they just did not need any artificial outside motivation. If they did not have it, many things were tried, often with considerable success. As to which aids were the most helpful in motivating the child, eight teachers placed still pictures as the best motivating tool. Background building and story telling were each acclaimed first by two teachers. Film-strips, dramatization, and the sand table were placed first by one teacher each. Teacher 3rD declared that the best motivating force ~~was~~ the desire of the first graders to imitate the upper grade children and to read like them.

Ranked second in importance as a motivating agency were: story telling, by five teachers; dramatization, four; still

pictures, background building, and film strips, two each; phonograph-records, one. Third place went to story telling, listed as such by six teachers; dramatization, four; still pictures, three; background building and visitations, one each.

Other worthwhile means of motivating mentioned were : making booklets on things studied, handwork, relating and discussing own experiences, field trips. Teacher 3A listed art-work, paper-cutting, drawing and coloring, and clay molding as good. Two teachers, 1A and 3rA, stated that current radio programs were unsuitable for classroom work.

#### The Library and Its Use

All sixteen teachers indicated that they used library facilities in their rooms. Thirteen teachers reported libraries within their first grade room. Five teachers used the school library; and twelve teachers told of using county library facilities. Books from these county libraries were received: three times a year, four times, as needed, or "starting in January."

Teacher 1B reported that she had individual reading records for her first grade children. Teacher 3rD had a private library and library table for her first graders. Teacher 3rB stated that her library reading this year had not been as successful as it was a year ago when the county superintendent had a library book reading campaign which offered

an incentive that was apparently lacking this year.

As to the greatest, average, and least number of books read by the children, the best that the teachers could do was to make estimates. The highest average was received at School 1B with twenty books. School 2A estimated its average at fifteen; and 1A, at twelve. Six schools estimated their averages at ten books read during the year, and six gave five books as the average. The lowest average was two, reported by Teacher 3rC.

The most books read by any one child was listed at thirty by five schools, all within the first and second class districts. Definitely weakest in this "most books read" were third class schools of all types. The lowest "most books read" was three, and this was reported by School 3rC.

The doubtful honor of "the least number of books read by any one student" was strongly competed for. Eight teachers reported zero; five teachers gave the number of two. Schools 1B and 3vB tied for the highest number read in this category, each having reported five books read. Apparently schools of all classes have library non-users.

#### Successful Practices Used in Reading Instruction

What practice, or practices, in your own experiences have been especially successful in the teaching of first grade reading? This was one of a series of ten questions asked the teachers as a part of the questionnaire. All of the teachers, except Teacher 3A who did not report on this or any of the enquiries, indicated definite practices that

they felt were of genuine help. These replies have been compiled and are listed below in order of frequency of usage. The number after each entry designates the number of times that that particular practice was named:

1. Flash cards 4
2. Vocabulary drill 4
3. Phonics 3
4. Story telling 3
5. Workbook 3
6. Drill games 2
7. Friendliness 2
8. Library books 2
9. Oral reading 2
10. Praise 2
11. Study units 2
12. Appeal to pride 1
13. Color words 1
14. Competition 1
15. Develop words from picture study 1
16. Dramatization 1
17. Easy material--lots of it 1
18. Films 1
19. Individual and not group treatment 1
20. Keep child busy 1
21. Let children move about 1
22. Order without regimentation 1
23. Patience 1
24. Picture study 1
25. Proper introduction to story 1
26. Regular lists of sight words submitted for drill 1
27. Reread story at home 1
28. Supplementary readers with same vocabulary as basic reader 1
29. Understanding 1

### Objectives of First Grade Reading

Another question asked the teachers was this: What do you feel should be accomplished in first grade reading? This question, the writer feels, cuts right to the heart of the basic educational philosophy as far as this study of reading is concerned. Again the replies are compiled and are listed by

frequency of usage. The number following each entry indicates the times that entry was cited as a goal.

1. Ease and smoothness 9
2. Comprehension 7
3. Ability to read 6
4. Interest and enjoyment 4
5. Sight vocabulary 4
6. Phonics 4
7. Read sentences--not call words 3
8. Oral discussion of content 2
9. Speed 2
10. Context, word analysis 2
11. Pictures, word analysis 2
12. Ability to follow instructions in seatwork and elsewhere 1
13. Handle books correctly 1
14. Know the reading signs 1
15. Proper eye span 1

It is essential that teachers have an exact understanding as to what they expect to accomplish in first grade reading. It would be extremely difficult to arrive at a definite goal, if one didn't know where he was going. This question of standard achievements, goals, objectives, or purposes to be achieved is so vital that the views of four reading authorities are here cited before bringing this portion of the paper to a close. McKee<sup>6</sup> has proposed these eight points as satisfactory standards of achievement for the first grade reader:

The child:

1. Demands meaning in using the selections made available to him. Is disturbed by lack of understanding. Looks upon reading as a thought process.
2. Becomes highly interested in reading a wide variety of suitable material.
3. Uses various tools in identifying strange words.
4. Recognizes familiar words readily in various settings and combinations.

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<sup>6</sup> Paul McKee The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 12

5. Reads aloud fluently rather than word by word.
6. Reads silently with little if any vocalization or lip movement.
7. Reads increasingly longer units of material.
8. Makes a grade score of at least 2 on standardized reading tests.

Adams et al<sup>7</sup> have set up a list of fundamental habits to be cultivated in first grade reading. They say that the teacher of the beginning class has the responsibility of teaching habits fundamental to all types of reading. These are:

1. correct and independent recognition of words;
2. a span of recognition sufficiently wide to recognize a "thought-group" of words at one fixation;
3. adequate speed of recognition;
4. rhythmical progress along the line without undue backward movements of the eyes or overlong pauses;
5. accurate return sweep of the eye from the end of one line to the beginning of the next line.

The teacher must never become so enamored of "flash card" drills and other procedures to promote mastery of the mechanics as to lose sight of the main purpose of reading--i.e., to get meaning.

Hildreth<sup>8</sup> writes that uniformity in achievement at the end of the first grade is not to be anticipated with typical classes but that capable learners can be expected to show the following skills and abilities:

1. Respond to reading with recognition and comprehension of simple sentences and paragraphs.
2. Use readers of the simplest level with little help on words from the teacher.
3. Remember sufficiently well what they have read to be able to talk about it.
4. Show enjoyment of reading easy stories and use easy books at the library table. Better readers in the class will read as many as ten or fifteen easy story-books in addition to regular reading in planned lessons.

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<sup>7</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1949),

<sup>8</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., p. 92



5. Read charts, bulletins, work sheets, and sentences and paragraphs in books for information.
6. Show accuracy and independence in recognizing a simple, high-frequency reading vocabulary.
7. Locate stories in books by page and title.
8. Read aloud from easy materials with understanding and expression.
9. Concentrate effort and attention for short periods on workbook exercises and other practice assignments.
10. Respond successfully to tests in workbooks or to tests accompanying readers, as well as to first-grade level standard tests.

Desirable levels of achievement at the end of the first or initial instruction, according to Betts,<sup>9</sup> are:

1. Ability to recognize 600 or 700 words in context, probably using context clues, picture clues, general configuration, and visual analysis.
2. Increasing interest in independent reading.
3. Ability to read orally first-grade material with reasonable accuracy and rhythm, i. e., phrasing.
4. Ability to read silently with a minimum of lip movement.
5. Ability in recognition and interpretation of punctuation.
6. Well established habits in left-to-right progression for tenses, phrases, words, and word elements.
7. Ability to follow directions.
8. Ability to reproduce the general thought of the content read.
9. Ability to use table of contents and to find pages.
10. Ability to identify each letter of the alphabet in isolation.

In that a scientific program of reading instruction is generally held to be more effective than hit-and-miss instruction, it is important that teachers be informed as to the latest theory and method advocated by the recognized authorities. While the expressed objectives of first grade

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<sup>9</sup> Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties, (New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1936), p. 34.

reading instruction of the sixteen teachers were not as extensive as those in the lists used in quoting authority, their suggested objectives were surely in order.

The four leading objectives of reading according to the survey teachers were: ease and smoothness in reading, comprehension, ability to read, and interest and enjoyment. In one of her lists, Hildreth offered these: comprehension, independence, memory, and ability to discuss the story, and enjoyment. Betts, in his list of objectives, included: vocabulary, interest, ability in oral reading, and ability in silent reading.

The writer believes that teachers and authority were looking in the same direction in this matter of first grade goals in reading instruction.

The non-use of library books appeared to be a common problem, and one teacher implied that a county-wide reading program, sponsored by the superintendent of schools, could be extremely helpful to popularize the use of the library.

Without slavishly following it, all of the teachers kept in close consultation with the state course of study.

## CHAPTER IV

### READING READINESS

#### I. KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

The child's native ability, his home environment, and his personal experience will largely determine his success upon entering the first grade. One factor that enters into his pre-first grade life is the kindergarten. Of the two-hundred sixty-two children tested in this research, only thirty-five (or 13  $\frac{4}{10}$  per cent) had kindergarten training before entry into the first grade. Of this number with kindergarten experience, thirty were reported from first class schools included in this survey. Of these, twenty-five came from School 1B; thus, only two of the children who were tested at that school had been without benefit of kindergarten. School 1B, incidently, was the school that scored the highest median in grade equivalents (2.9) on the Reilley Primary Reading Test.

Of the remaining five children with kindergarten experience, four were in attendance at schools maintained by second class districts and one was from a third class one room rural school. None of the second or third class districts visited had any kindergarten facilities, private or public. These five children mentioned in this paragraph had moved in from out-of-state or Montana urban areas where kindergarten schools were operated.

While the authorities today recommend kindergarten training prior to admission to the first grade, not enough specific evidence one way or another was turned up in this study to cite any difference between kindergarten and non-kindergarten trained pupils.

## II. FIRST GRADE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

As to when a child should be permitted to enter the first grade, requirements differed in detail, but some variant of the six year age limit seemed evident throughout. Since all three first class schools were from the same school district, it is obvious that there was but one administrative policy there, that being that all children six years old by October thirty-first were admitted to grade one. Children whose birthdays occurred between November first and December thirty-first, inclusive, were given the Van Wagenen Reading Readiness Test,<sup>1</sup> and were retained in school if they scored four-tenths or higher.

Four schools set the rule, "six years by November first." One of these schools required children below that age to take the Van Wagenen Reading Readiness Test. Another one required that all children under six years of age admitted take the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test<sup>2</sup> at the termination of the

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<sup>1</sup> M. J. Van Wagenen Reading Readiness Test, Educational Test Bureau, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, World Book Company, Chicago, Illinois.

readiness period. In practice, however, all children tested were retained irrespective of the grades achieved.

School 2B required the child to be six years old on or before the opening day of school. No five year olds were admitted whatsoever! This school gave the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test,<sup>3</sup> but no children were rejected, regardless of the score made. This test was given at the termination of the reading readiness period.

School 3C gave the Van Wagenen test to every child, irrespective of age. One six year old child was sent home this school year because of this policy. Another school specified "six years when school starts" with the provision that the teacher may, at her discretion, take them in younger. Another school set the limit at six, but stated that local exceptions were made. Still another required that the beginner be six years of age by January first and that all, except repeaters, must take the Metropolitan Test. One school admitted the children when the parents sent them but planned next year to give a test to determine readiness. The remaining, save one, required that the child be six by January first with no tests given.

Teacher 2A had an interesting suggestion as to entry requirements. She would require that all beginning children

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<sup>3</sup> Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test, California Test Bureau, Los Angeles, California.

take and pass a test. Any child would be withheld from entry until he passed the test, or until he reached the age of eight, at which time he would be admitted regardless of his achievement in the reading test.

One evident observation will be made here: the first class district had developed the most consistent and rigid entry requirements, and the third class schools, especially the rural, had the most lax and disorganized.

Who are these school beginners? What are beginning first graders like? Hildreth<sup>4</sup> thinks of them in these words:

Like an army of raw recruits they descend upon the first grade each year with a wide range of capacities and the mores of various cultural and social backgrounds. In age, the typical class ranges from about five and a half years to over seven. Some classes range a full two years of age. Occasionally the median age is under six.

The most striking facts that have been brought out in readiness surveys of school entrants are: (1) the extremely wide range of maturity found in any typical entering group; (2) the relative immaturity of a large proportion of the entering population for the conventional first-grade program.

Forty per cent is a conservative estimate of the proportion of beginners who are too immature to profit from intensive reading instruction at the outset of schooling.

Children of the same mental age still vary widely in potentiality for learning. Of three children with a mental age of six, one may learn very rapidly, one at an average pace, and the third very slowly.

These beginners differ in their capacities for self-help and in their feelings of security away from home and

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<sup>4</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Program in the Early Primary Period," The Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), p. 59.

mother. They also differ in the nature and quality of experiences they have had before entering school.

It is generally recognized today that children enter school too early and that immaturity is the greatest cause for first grade difficulties and failure. As to the desired age for entry to the first grade, Adams et al<sup>5</sup> write that:

A study published in 1931 concluded that that "by postponing the teaching of reading until children reach the mental age of six years and a half, teachers can greatly decrease the chances of failure and discouragement, and can correspondingly increase their efficiency."

Hildreth,<sup>6</sup> on the question of entry age, says that:

Studies that have been made of the relation between time of beginning systematic instruction and subsequent achievement in reading show that typical children are better off if they do not begin to read until they are at least six years and three months of age. An age of six and a half is even more likely to insure success for the mentally average child. Younger, mentally gifted children are safe risks; on the other hand, a mentally dull child must be nearer seven before he can achieve much success in this associative--linguistic process. Dull children below six can learn to say the ABC's or to pronounce words that are isolated for them, but these skills have little relation to meaningful context of reading.

### III. READING READINESS

The more experiences that the child has had, the better prepared he is to begin his reading training. There are many factors that enter into this readiness condition, but experience

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<sup>5</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 111, citing Mabel V. Morphett and Carleton Washburne, "When Should Children Begin to Read," Elementary School Journal, Vol. 31, March, 1931, pp. 496-503.

<sup>6</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., p. 60.

appears to be the foundation out of which the others spring. Linguistic readiness and speaking vocabulary are two of the more important prerequisites to reading. About these Betts<sup>7</sup> writes that "A knowledge of the speaking vocabularies of pre-school and primary children is necessary for the preparation of reading materials for beginners. Both vocabulary and interest are closely related."

Additional ideas on the subject are supplied by Hildreth<sup>8</sup>, who says that:

Linguistic readiness is the cornerstone of learning to read. Until children can speak well and listen attentively to conversation, they are not ready to read.

A school with an inviting atmosphere leads children to talk as naturally as they do at home about things that impress and interest them. Teachers are advised to cultivate linguistic readiness in their pupils by following these recommendations:

1. Improve the child's ability to listen with understanding.
2. Talk interestingly to the children in language they can understand.
3. Build natural use of language through conversation.
4. Have the children tell about things that happen at home, where they go, and how they celebrate on holidays. Have them tell the group about their families and about the things they bring from home.
5. If the children eat together, lunch period is a good time to have some informal conversation about things of interest to the group.
6. Have purposeful conversation during planning of activities, such as a trip to the park or a picnic in the woods.
7. Provide situations that stimulate speaking, induce listening, and provide "ear training"--songs, music, jingles.

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<sup>7</sup> Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties, (New York: Row, Peterson and Company, (1936), p. 201.

<sup>8</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., pp. 66-67.



8. Have fun with poetry and rhymes. The delight taken in rhymes enhances their desire to talk and promote their discrimination of word sounds.

9. Be sure that every child has a turn at oral expression. Draw out the shy children who otherwise might mute. Show pictures, talk about them, and have children tell about them. Have children repeat sentences that describe pictures they enjoy; help them use better sentences in talking.

10. Help the children carry in mind what they have heard by having them relate experiences or events in a story.

11. Teach children the names of things; clarify the meanings of common names and terms.

12. Provide plenty of preparatory language activity for all bilinguals and speech-handicapped children.

Fourteen of the sixteen teachers interviewed reported that a reading readiness period was used. School 3rA had no reading readiness period. The first graders started in a pre-primer the first day of classes. School 3rD was difficult to catalog. Teacher 3rD claimed that there was no reading readiness period, that none was necessary because of her advanced first grade readers (class median, 1.8, Reilley test). On the other hand, a Row, Peterson Publishing Company reading readiness workbook with a reading readiness test was used.

Workbooks appeared to be the mainstay in teaching reading readiness with schools of all districts. Except for School 3rA, which had no reading readiness period, every school used one or more of these. The publishers of these workbooks used are listed with other reading materials in Chapter VII. Of the sixteen classrooms interviewed, two schools used three reading readiness workbooks each; four schools, two books; nine schools, one book; and one school, none. There appeared to be slightly greater emphasis placed on these workbooks in the third class rural schools than elsewhere and a little less use of them in the first class schools than at others.

In the opinion of the teachers, aspects of reading readiness most stressed were: picture study, reported by 15 teachers; muscle and eye coordination, 10 teachers; oral expression and vocabulary drill, 9 each; and visitations, 1. Other practices used were: scrapbook construction, phonics, cultivation of eye span (phrases not words), discussion of home life and other experiences, auditory training, reading mechanics (left to right, top to bottom), cultivation of coherent thought, and development of units, such as the post office. Teacher 2A was of the opinion that important abilities to cultivate in reading readiness were: learning to mind, giving attention, and playing games with other children.

Reading readiness (mind set) embraces many things. It means different things to different people. Adams et al<sup>9</sup> remind us, in this connection, that:

Although a child who wants to read is ready for reading in at least one important particular, a keen desire to read is only one indication of readiness. The child must be ready, willing, and able. This final capability is an intricate quality including mental, emotional, physical, and social readiness as well as a rich background of experience and ability in language expression.

To the stock-pile of data on readiness, Betts<sup>10</sup> adds this, "Before the introduction of the first reader, the child should have a reading vocabulary of about two hundred words."

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<sup>9</sup> Adams, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>10</sup> Betts, op. cit., p. 33.

Nickell<sup>11</sup> states that "if both intelligence and reading readiness tests show that the child is ready for reading, his pre-reading program may be shortened.

"Children forced to read before they are mentally developed to a point where they are able to succeed are likely to develop a dislike for reading."

When the question of length of the reading readiness period was scrutinized, greater differences were discovered within each class school than between the different classes of schools. Two teachers (3C and 3rB) each reported twelve weeks, the former explaining that six weeks was her normal time. It was her retarded group that necessitated this longer period. Two schools (3B and 3rC) each used eight weeks. Two schools (3rA and 3rD) allotted no time for reading readiness; two other (1A and 3vA) allowed three weeks for it. Five schools had six weeks each; and three schools, four weeks.

The three first class schools, all under one school administration, apparently had freedom of action in determining the time to be used for reading readiness. 1A used three weeks; 1B took six; and 1C four.

How long should the reading period be? What, exactly, is the purpose of this readiness period? Below Hildreth<sup>12</sup> answers both questions. The reading readiness period, she says,

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<sup>11</sup> Vernon L. Nickell, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois Curriculum and Course of Study Guide for Elementary Schools, (Springfield, Illinois: State Department of Public Instruction, 1943), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., p. 69.

is set up to:

Interest children in reading and motivate them to want to learn. Preparatory activities should continue until there is evidence that the pupils are mature enough to learn to associate meanings with printed words--four to ten weeks is the typical period. Some children need several months for an adjustment period; bilinguals from poor homes should have a full year of readiness experience before doing much with reading.

The advantage of substituting a broad program of readiness experience for the time-consuming reading lessons at the outset of schooling may be summarized as follows:

1. The transition from home or kindergarten to first grade is more successfully bridged.
2. Teachers have an opportunity to observe children and to size up their abilities.
3. Failure of unready children in reading is prevented.
4. A meaningful background for learning to read is provided.
5. Projects begun in the readiness period provide themes for the first reading lessons.
6. Children learn self-responsibility which lays the foundation for individualized study lessons.
7. A more hygienic school program for young children can be provided.

The fact that a pupil proves mature enough to learn to read is no guarantee that he will promptly do so. Whether a pupil succeeds or fails still depends upon how well reading instruction is handled in the beginning lessons.

Thirteen schools made the change from reading readiness to pre-primer reading on a group basis. One exception within this group was School 2C (which had forty-six children) where the number was divided into two sections for convenience. Teacher 3A converted on an individual basis. She placed the children in active reading training as each was ready. By February first all were again put together in a single group. She believed that, once advanced beyond readiness, the children fared better in the single group organization because this plan tended to boost the morale of the retarded segment in that they (the retarded) tended

to emulate the more advanced pupils.

In reading readiness, the teachers were asked, "How do you determine when the child is ready to read?" Their replies (abridged) follow:

1. Attentiveness, interest, ability to concentrate 5  
(Times Cited)
2. Picture study, can pick out detail 4
3. Can follow sequence of events in pictures 3
4. Follows instructions 3
5. Ability to discuss and retell stories 2
6. Eye and muscle coordination 2
7. Interest and ability to handle books 2
8. Knows words and phrases, from pre-primer, through black board drill and with flash cards 2
9. Recognizes differences and likenesses in words and forms 2
10. Settled, socialized 2
11. Child's curiosity aroused 1
12. Completion of reading readiness workbook and other similar, supplementary material 1
13. Comprehension 1
14. Fluency in oral language 1
15. Knows basic name and action words 1
16. Old enough: physically, mentally, emotionally socially 1
17. Participation in group activities 1
18. Picture study, left to right, top to bottom 1
19. Reading readiness test 1
20. Tries to read signs, posters, and written materials 1

Teacher 3rA, who reported using no reading readiness period, used the Winston series of books. First, she used the large picture book. From these pictures, stories were imagined, and this was followed by related seatwork. Soon the children started asking questions about the pictures. Interest was aroused. The only solution to this high state of motivation was to learn how to read to find the answers. They started to learn how to read by reading to find the answers. This was purposeful reading!

The reading authorities agree that reading readiness is

essential to the mastery of reading. Likewise, the teachers interviewed in this survey generally held that it was fundamental to successful reading instruction.

While the reading experts advocate the postponement of reading instruction until six or six and one-half years, the five year old children admitted to the schools of this survey established records in the Reilley Reading Test that suggested that they were, in most cases, well qualified for first grade work.

This favorable rating established by the five year old children may have been due, at least in part, to the fact that reading readiness tests were required and taken in many cases. Many teachers believed, further, that a reading readiness test should be required of all entering first graders, regardless of age.

This study revealed little evidence that kindergarten was any guarantee to better reading in the first grade. While the reading authorities cited all recommended that the beginning first graders should have an age of six up to six and one-half years, only one school stood fast by a six year age entry requirement. Nearly all schools maintained some form of age entry requirement that gravitated around the six year mark, but in practice five year old children were often admitted with or without a readiness test. In line with the recommendations of the reading experts, fourteen of the sixteen teachers did report the use of a reading readiness period. The length of these readiness periods and the means of achieving readiness varied considerably, but the practices used

throughout this survey were generally in line with accepted theory.

## CHAPTER V

### VOCABULARY: WORD RECOGNITION, PHONICS, AND WORD ANALYSIS

Vocabulary building comes early in the first grade reading program. Students of mental hygiene and reading caution, however, that the child should not be pushed too abruptly into vocabulary building as well as into other aspects of the reading program. Instead the child should be slowly and carefully eased into his reading instruction. Adams et al<sup>1</sup> have recommended the following guideposts to be used in the introduction of reading:

1. Avoid rushing the child into reading before he is ready.
2. Avoid making the child feel that he is a failure.
3. Find something he can do, since a feeling of personal worth and achievement is a "must" if mental health is to be preserved or achieved. (The normal child is well adjusted when he enters school. The school must seek to preserve the condition while subjecting him to many new pressures.)
4. Make simple, relatively easy reading assignments, especially when developing new skills.
5. Make reading an interesting experience, well-planned, well-motivated.
6. Resist the tendency to exert pressure on the child.
7. Avoid making comparisons with the progress of other children.
8. Establish sympathetic rapport with the child; show him you are his good friend.
9. Choose books appropriate to his age and interests, not forgetting, however, that these may be used as a point of departure for vicarious experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), pp. 85-86.



10. Develop a background of meaningful concepts through first-hand experiences.

11. Prepare for a given reading selection by using verbal concepts based as far as possible on concrete experiences and fortified and clarified by visual aids.

12. Make use both of a good approach and an efficient follow-through. Evaluate the child's progress and do needed constructive remedial training as indicated.

13. Allow the child to see evidence of his own improvement. He may compete with his own record but not with that of others.

14. Attempt to identify failures and translate them into successes before it is too late, lest the experience of failing becomes habitual and the unfortunate effects accumulate.

However, if the child is to learn how to read, he must read. That is, he must be exposed to considerable reading experience; he must expend some effort toward that end; and he should have a substantial amount of guided practice and meaningful drill. According to many authorities, vocabulary building is one of the two most important aspects of primary reading, the other being reading readiness. The testing program which was a part of this study indicated that the children observed were satisfactorily accomplished in word recognition. Extensive word drill had been used to achieve the desired vocabulary; and phonics, it appeared, was the means of word-analysis most commonly used.

Since phonics holds an important place, it was deemed desirable to check into its use in the schools visited. How was phonics taught? Did the children use phonics actively in identifying new and unknown words? When was phonics brought into the teaching program? These and similar questions were kept in mind as the use of phonics in word recognition was

inquired into.

Six teachers reported that their phonics teaching started in the reading readiness period during the first week of school. Three others started within the first month of school, and four more introduced phonics by the close of the second month of school. One brought phonics in during the twelfth week, and two introduced it sometime during the fifth month.

In all cases phonics was introduced more or less incidentally, and generally it was kept incidental, at least during the first half-year. One teacher who started informally reported that a formal class in phonics was developed during the second half-year. One teacher brought phonics into the curriculum when the children started to become sound-conscious; another introduced it as the need became evident; a third introduced phonics as an aid to the children in developing the required sight vocabulary.

All but six teachers had a formal period designated for the study of phonics. Even these six, while not making an issue of it, taught the children phonics incidentally in connection with reading. Three teachers taught phonics, as such, in conjunction with the regular reading class, and two merged phonics with spelling. One teacher alternated a class of phonics with art.

Twelve of the teachers interviewed used workbooks in the study of phonics. Their methods of teaching phonics was patterned after the instructions of whichever workbook was

used. The two workbooks that seemed to be the most popular were: (1) "Phonics We Use,"<sup>2</sup> Book A (and Book B, in two cases), and (2) "Eye and Ear Fun,"<sup>3</sup> by Clarence R. Stone. "Phonics Fun,"<sup>4</sup> Grade 1, was used by one teacher, and another developed her phonics training in connection with the Scott Foresman publication, "Before We Read."

Teacher 3C used as her guide Lydia M. Williams' "How To Teach Phonics."<sup>5</sup> From this she developed her own devices for phonics instruction, these being worked out mostly on the blackboard.

Teacher 3A used no text or workbook. She knew "the teaching of phonics by heart!" Two teachers reported that they followed the state course of study in the teaching of phonics. Other angles stressed included: word families, new assignments checked for new words, and flash cards.

In answering the question as to how they taught phonics, three teachers stated that they used the family method. Eight said that they followed the instructions in the workbooks used. Two teachers started their work in phonics as listening activities through rhymes, and another developed phonics on the basis of likenesses in word beginnings and endings. Seven teachers taught the sounds of the letters and then illustrated to the

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<sup>2</sup> Lyons and Carhahan, New York.

<sup>3</sup> Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis.

<sup>4</sup> Beckley, Cardy Company, Chicago.

<sup>5</sup> Hall and McCreary Company, Chicago.

children how these sounds were put together to make syllables and words. One of these six introduced the letter (name and sound) by a story for each one. With experience in seeing and hearing these letters, the child soon learned to identify the sound with the letter. Teacher 3rB introduced the consonants by a game, and the children immediately applied this learning through recognizing the initial consonants of new, unknown words. One teacher developed phonics with her writing class, and two others merged spelling and phonics.

Teacher 3rA reported that her first spelling lessons were purely a matter of teaching sound likenesses. She felt that phonics was a very personal proposition and that the extent to which it was used depended entirely upon the class and the child.

Teacher 2B-a taught the ABC's. She had the children name and sound them. The alphabet was divided into three groups--A to G, H to P, and Q to Z--and each child received a silver star on a chart when he mastered the names and sounds of each group. When he had received his three stars on the chart, the child would be called to the front of the room where, with the inspiring applause of his classmates, he would be presented with a big star to keep.

Teacher 3C started phonics when the child became conscious of the similarity in words. There was not much formal drill. Instead, phonics became a casual part of the reading lesson. "We do not interrupt a good story to have phonics," she reported.

All of the teachers indicated that they believed that phonics fostered independent and fluent reading in the following school years. It developed independent readers who were able to help themselves over an unknown word. The personal satisfaction forthcoming through such a victory, they felt, induced the child to do outside reading of his own volition. Phonics, they pointed out, became more efficient with usage, and soon the mechanics of it were lost through the habit of usage. The more independent the reader became through the use of phonics, the greater became his enjoyment in reading.

Two teachers observed that phonics would be a hindrance to some of the slower children, but a good class, they said, would soon be using phonics functionally.

For a comprehensive coverage of phonics, and word analysis generally, the writer recommends "Teaching Children To Read" by Adams et al<sup>6</sup> and "The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties" by Betts.<sup>7</sup>

Adams and her co-workers advocate a new phonics, not a reactivation of the Beacon, Gordon, or Ward system. Under this new plan the child receives guidance in word analysis in a functional setting. This new scheme feeds the instruction of phonics into the educational hopper over an eight or twelve year period rather than only during the primary period. Indirect memory devices, as were used in the old formal types, are not used in this new plan.

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6 Adams, op. cit., pp. 320-344.

7 Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties, (New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1936), pp. 205-224.

Adams<sup>8</sup> would withhold word analysis "until (a) pupils show a genuine interest in reading; (b) have a reasonable stock of sight words; (c) have been exposed to planned exercises in ear training; and (d) have begun to notice similarities and differences in word forms."

Adams et al do not confine word analysis to phonics alone but recommend the use of sight syllables (common prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings that are stable enough as visual elements to give dependable pronunciation clues), a minimum number of sight words, word-form clues, and structural analysis.

They point out the value of rhymes in ear training, the noticing of likenesses and differences in the sounds of words, and urge that teachers use the guidebook or manual that accompanies the basal reader that is used.

Betts, too, recommends that the phonetic instruction that is given should follow the manual accompanying the basal series of readers. While believing in phonics, Betts<sup>9</sup> cautions teachers as to its pitfalls. He says,

"First, only about 84 per cent of the commonly used words are phonetic. Second, the many exceptions to each rule may introduce interference factors which cause confusions. The use of phonetic rules is a questionable procedure. Third, the distortion of the sound value of a given phonetic element in a word confuses the beginner rather than facilitates learning. Fourth, over-emphasis on mechanical analysis leads to "word calling" rather than

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<sup>8</sup> Adams, op. cit., p. 336

<sup>9</sup> Betts, op. cit., p. 220

"thought getting." Fifth, only elements with a high frequency of occurrence should be taught; otherwise, the knowledge and skills cannot be practiced. Sixth, a disproportionate amount of time may be spent on phonetics which is only one aspect of word recognition."

Other techniques of word analysis that Betts recommends that reading teachers should use besides phonics are:

1. Recognition by general configuration
2. The use of context clues
3. The use of picture clues
4. Visual analysis
5. Analysis of compound words
6. Syllabication

Partially in line with the teachings of Betts, three teachers said that by making the child word conscious, helping him to see likenesses and differences in words, noting little words in big words, observing similarities in beginnings and endings, phonics and other means of word analysis can become functional aids not only in reading but also in the mastery of spelling.

Teacher 1A had had experience teaching eighth graders, and she felt that children with a background in phonics were independent in facing new words. She added that children without benefit of phonics were helpless. This handicap made their reading assignments in the content subjects a major struggle, until often they quit reading them all together.

Teacher 2C claimed that children who get phonics from the first, advance most rapidly in reading. Teacher 3C stated that a good foundation in word analysis laid in the first grade paid off later on in fluent, independent reading.

What was done about the alphabet in the sixteen classrooms visited? All teachers had the pupils recognize the letters by name, disregarding alphabetical order. All of the

teachers had the children learn to write the letters. Six of them had the children memorize the alphabet, and three teachers had the children sing it. Many of these classrooms had the alphabet posted in front of the room, usually over the blackboard. One teacher had the children write the letters in the air with their fingers; another taught a rhyme for each letter. Attention was called to the fact that parents continue to regard a knowledge of the alphabet as essential to learning to read, and it was not uncommon for the beginning first grader to come to school the first day scrubbed clean, red apple in hand, and with the alphabet memorized.

Six teachers more or less deliberately taught the children the concept of vowels and consonants; two teachers did so incidentally; and the other eight taught neither. Hildreth<sup>10</sup> would have the children learn:

the names of the different letters at about the time they begin word analysis and discussion of word structure so that they can talk with the teacher about the letters that make up a particular word. They learn that the letters have names different from their sounds. The pupils also need to know the alphabetical order of the letters for arranging words alphabetically in their picture dictionaries and word lists, for checking the spelling of words, and later on, for looking up word meanings in simplified children's dictionaries.

Gates,<sup>11</sup> in connection with the alphabet, writes that:

The letters should not be taught as a separate project

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<sup>10</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Programs in the Early Primary Period," Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949) p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 168-170.



but only as the information is needed in the regular lesson and as the child's interest and curiosity prompts it.

Teaching the letters, in other words, except as they are realistically called for in other activities, is not a recommended feature of the prereading program.

ABC Books, alphabet blocks, identifying letters on doors may be pointed out, if Barbara has an initial B in the corner of her handkerchiefs this fact may be shown,...

The purpose in all of this work, however, is merely gradually to increase the pupil's awareness of letters and his familiarity with them. The child will learn a letter here and there and gradually add to his stock.

Numerous vocabulary games were played. Teacher 2B-a enumerated an amazing number of vocabulary teaching schemes. The day room 2B-a was visited, the blackboard had on it four different devices for teaching vocabulary:

- (1) The month is May  
The day is Friday.
- (2) We know our ABC's and can sound them out.  
(Names and stars followed.)
- (3) Trouble Words.  
(Following this were listed the troublemakers.)
- (4) News  
Boys and girls, we will have visitors today.  
There are only five days left of school.  
It will soon be our picnic day.

Besides these board activities, Teacher 2B-a briefly explained vocabulary games that she reported used very successfully in her room: playing train, the airplane ride, the balloon game, and the ladder game. While drilling is condoned, Adams et al<sup>12</sup> regard old-fashioned word drills as undesirable and about them they write:

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<sup>12</sup> Adams, op. cit., pp. 196-197

Questions which teachers often ask are, "How much drill shall I give children on vocabulary? Shall I ever make use of flash card drills?" The old idea of spending the first five minutes (or even ten!) of the reading period in word drill of an isolated type has been generally discarded as time poorly spent. What the children are interested in is reading the new story...The new words and concepts are quickly introduced and checked once. But mastery will come from meeting the words in the actual story setting, or as the result of skill-building procedures that follow a reading session in the basic reader.

Old-fashioned word drill practices, such as "crossing the brook" by calling off the words printed on poorly drawn "stepping stones"; "climbing a ladder" by recognizing words printed on the rungs, or other such sugar-coated devices, have little logical connection with genuine reading. If words are introduced slowly on the comfortable plan provided by the controlled vocabulary of the average modern reading series, if sufficient attention is given to developing the meaning of each word, and if related skill-building procedures are provided in extra sessions and in the workbook, the prolonged word drills and vocabulary reviews which formerly preceded a reading of the story in the basic book are unnecessary.

Teacher 3A related her much used game, "Read For Fun."

On cold wintery days when the children were not able to go out to play, they took turns reading a page from a story they themselves had selected. Sometimes they read by "teams", each child reading but a sentence while the rest of the class watched to see who read the best; or, they read by rows to see which row read the best.

Every teacher reported that she used flash cards. Word and phrase cards were reported used by eleven teachers each; sentence cards by six; and label and action cards once each. Seven reported that commercial cards were used, two of these being sets especially prepared for the series of pre-primers and primers used. Most of the teachers made their own cards.

One reported that she "used old material on hand"; and another, that she "used the blackboard to avoid the useless busywork of making cards". In most cases the rush in flash card use came at the first part of the year. One reported that flash cards were used extensively; two, very little.

As to the use of labels, Hildreth<sup>13</sup> has this to say:

It is to the child's advantage to learn to recognize words on labels placed on various things about the room because they teach the association of words with meanings and demonstrate the usefulness of reading. All the lettering of signs, notices, charts, bulletins, labels, and blackboard writing should be done in properly-spaced, well-formed manuscript writing.

All authorities recommend, and all the teachers included in this survey used, some manner of seatwork. Since a substantial part of this seatwork is directed toward vocabulary building, the following list by McKee<sup>14</sup> suggesting a number of suitable seatwork exercises is presented:

1. Distinguishing the form of a given word from the forms of other words with which it is frequently confused.
2. Answering questions that serve as a check on comprehension of a selection used.
3. Making a drawing or performing some other activity in the light of given printed directions.
4. Matching words and sentences with appropriate pictures.
5. Placing in correct order the events of a story read.
6. Classifying words according to a given criterion.
7. Selecting words and groups of words from among a mass of material according to a given criterion, such as initial sound elements, meaning, ending, or base word included.
8. Matching a given group of words with the same group in a sentence.
9. Matching short stories with appropriate pictures.

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<sup>13</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., p. 75

<sup>14</sup> Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), pp. 267-268.

10. Finding familiar base words in variants.
11. Finding or making correct endings for sentences in order to indicate comprehension of material read.
12. Matching words that have the same beginning or ending sound.
13. Connecting an isolated letter with a word that begins or ends with that letter.
14. Selecting from among a list of words those that have the same sound ending.
15. Guessing the name of a new word from a picture.
16. Indicating whether the sound of a given letter occurs at the beginning or ending of a word.

The practices and principles, plans and procedures for teaching vocabulary and reading are endless, and most of them have merit. These sundry plans and practices aid the child only as they are used. The child, it would appear, must be worked with and worked with in reading, while all of the time kept in a happy state of mind. And if the child is to develop a sight vocabulary, learn aids for use in word analysis, and cultivate smooth, comprehensive reading, chances are good, this writer feels, that these suggested schemes, applied, will be more valuable than time utilized in excessive amount of paper coloring, pasting, and cutting.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMPREHENSION AND THE ORAL-SILENT READING PROGRAM

Down through the years people interested and well versed in reading have held different views as to the relative value of oral and silent reading. In more recent times, irrespective of the stand taken in the oral-silent controversy, experts generally held that comprehension is the important consideration in reading. ~~The farther this fast moving world~~ enters into this twentieth century, the higher the premium it puts on speed in reading.

Historically,<sup>1</sup> the period from 1880 to 1914 was an era of training in oral reading. From 1915 to 1924 this emphasis gave away to the advent of silent reading. Oral reading was of little or no importance from 1925 to 1930, but by 1929 educators recognized a need for oral reading. Since that time education has been striving for a reading program which would provide a "reasonable" balance between oral and silent reading, and which would put first emphasis on comprehension, but would also recognize the importance of interest and speed.

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<sup>1</sup> Ada V. Hyatt, The Place of Oral Reading in the School Program, (Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 872, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943.

## I. ORAL READING

Oral reading is generally recognized as being basic to any primary reading instruction. If there is any question as between oral and silent reading, it is one of degree rather than one of either-or. Before going into the practices of the fifteen schools of this survey, a number of the suggested benefits of oral reading in primary instruction will be reviewed.

Oral reading "creates a firmer bond between words and ideas. Since children are ear minded, the meaning is clearer, more actual, more intimate to the heard word than the seen word."<sup>2</sup>

Oral reading widens "speaking vocabulary" and tends to "improve speech and conversation."<sup>3</sup>

...good oral reading is essential to the complete getting of experiences from many literary selections. This is particularly true of poetry, most of which must be read aloud to be fully appreciated. If for no other reason, oral reading should be taught as a means<sup>4</sup> of getting the most out of certain types of literature.

Since oral reading tends to promote poise and confidence in the presence of an audience, it is of value in developing personality.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 88, citing Franklin T. Baker, "The Case for Oral Reading," The Elementary English Review, V, May, 1928, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 89, citing Donald D. Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities, (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1940), p. 115.

<sup>4</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 90, citing Paul McKee, Reading and Literature in the Elementary School, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 567.

<sup>5</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 92, citing James M. McCallister, Remedial and Corrective Instruction in Reading, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), p. 28.

The use of oral reading in school and colleges, in religious education and in church services, and "in the theater and on the radio" is increasing.<sup>6</sup>

Speech is the first and most natural form of intercourse... It is...apparent that every phase of oral expression is in constant demand in our social and business life.<sup>7</sup>

"For a child to perform by reading before the class and be praised by the teacher is highly satisfying," and then other children wish to do likewise.<sup>8</sup>

The fifteen schools ~~included in this survey~~ of Western Montana definitely identified themselves as oral reading schools. In answer to the question, "As between oral and silent reading, what per cent of your reading program is given over to (a) oral and (b) silent reading?", one school said that it allotted 100 per cent to the oral and none to the silent. ~~Two schools, the extreme supporters of silent~~ reading in this survey, divided their time fifty-fifty. Nine schools reported that they gave 75 per cent or more of their reading time to oral reading; two schools gave two-thirds of the time to oral reading; two others, 60 per cent; and two, 50 per cent.

Teacher 2B-a, who reported all of her reading program as oral, acknowledged that her children did get some experience in silent reading in their workbooks and other seatwork.

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<sup>6</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 94, citing Davis Edwards, "Recent Trends and Developments in Interpretive and Choral Reading," Reading and Pupil Development, II, October, 1940, p. 270

<sup>7</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 94, citing Emma Glaser, On the Teaching of Junior High School English, (New York: D. Appleton-

<sup>8</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 87, citing Ellen C. Henderson, Reading and Speaking Techniques, (New York: The Pyramid Press, 1937), p. 52.

Table I (page II) shows that the children of 2B-a had a median of 9.0 in sentences meaning, compared to 8.0 for the Montana survey median and 8.2 for the Reilley Median; and 5.5 in paragraph meaning compared to 4.0 for the Montana group and 4.6 for the Reilley Median. Apparently, this imbalance between oral and silent reading had not been made at the expense of comprehension. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that this favorable standing was established in spite of, and not because of, this unbalanced reading program.

Four teachers (1C, 3A, 3vB, and 3rA) indicated that they used more silent reading in the second half of first year reading than they did during the first part. Teacher 3rB (allowing 80 per cent of her reading program to oral reading) said that oral reading should be emphasized through-out the first three grades. Teacher 3C, who divided her time one-half for each, said that 75 per cent of the time should be devoted to oral reading, 25 per cent to silent.

Though but slightly in some cases, oral reading in all schools was started in the reading readiness period, and in every school it was retained as the important type of reading instruction.

#### Choral Reading

Eleven of the teachers used choral reading to some extent. Evaluations of its use varied from all-out enthusiasm to extreme doubt.. Three of these teachers reported that they used it much, while seven said, "a little." Of those



teachers who used it, two were highly impressed by its worth and three were not convinced that it had much merit. The pro-choral teachers said that it was an aid to poor readers in that it speeded them up, improved their expression, and cultivated their attentiveness.

Teachers who used a little choral reading but who had their doubts said: "not much appeal", "of little value", "not too helpful", "they like it", and "questionable value."

Of the five teachers who didn't use choral reading, Teacher 2B-a said, "Haven't the time"; Teacher 3B, "not in first grade"; Teacher 3rA, "The child who needs reading practice the most wouldn't do any reading in a group, whereas the others would carry the load"; Teacher 2B-b, "no comment"; Teacher 3rB, "Can't be accomplished successfully in a small class" and "Questionable value anyhow."

But in the eyes of the reading authorities there is no question about the virtues of choral reading. Hyatt<sup>9</sup> offers this on the question:

Choral reading, or reading in concert, has merit when skillfully handled. Experts in speech particularly recommend this type of reading for children who have difficulty in articulation, phrasing or timing. Since choral reading is a group enterprise, minor errors by the individual child are concealed from his fellows, and he is carried along by the group into pleasing oral activities quite devoid of embarrassment or tension.

#### Story Reading and Story Telling as Opening Exercises

In response to the question, "To what extent is reading

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<sup>9</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 77, citing Arthur I. Gates, The New Work-Play Books, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 45.

to the pupils used as opening exercises both in the morning and afternoon?", four teachers reported "none." One of these (3vB) had a story hour after the last recess wherein the teacher and pupils shared in story telling and reading. The children selected their stories, and the teacher and children, taking turns, read to the group. In other cases, music, games, and/or physical education were used.

Teacher 2C read to the children during every opening exercise and reported the practice to be very successful. Two other teachers used their own form of opening exercises 75 per cent of the time. One of these (3rC) reported that the children voted as to whether they would read or sing. Reading was the most popular.

Seven teachers used story reading half of the time for opening exercises. One of these (3A) reported a daily one-half hour story hour. Teacher 2B-b said that the children "loved it!" Two teachers used story reading twenty-five per cent of the time.

~~In connection with opening exercises, Teacher 3C~~ fell on a scheme to break an epidemic of tattling. In the morning, as a roll call measure, she would have each child tell something nice he saw some other child in the class do.

Teachers who use opening exercises of this type are supported by the reading authorities. Hyatt<sup>10</sup> writes that "much can be done to stimulate children to want to read and to

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<sup>10</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 87, citing Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Teaching of Reading for Better Living, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935), p. 204.

give them a standard of what constitutes good oral reading by the teacher's reading aloud to them."

Along this same line, Hildreth<sup>11</sup> states that story-telling and reading aloud have many benefits for school beginners. The teacher should bring the children together for a little while each day for stories and discussion to accustom the pupils to hearing good sentences and correct language patterns.

...Hearing good literature prepares children for understanding things they will read about later for themselves. In addition to cultivating linguistic readiness, story telling and reading aloud accustom children to sitting quietly, paying attention, and responding in the group.

There are many times when the teacher will be obliged to read informational material, notices, letters, directions, and the like, to the class. All this reading gives children a demonstration of what it means to read and impresses them with the importance of being able to read.

## II. SILENT READING

People versed in reading also see much virtue in and necessity for silent reading in the primary curriculum. Nor is this recognition a recent innovation. Quoting a source that goes back over twenty-five years, Hyatt<sup>12</sup> writes:

Some of the recognized values of silent-reading instruction included in a course of study for the elementary schools of Ohio, published in 1923, were as follows: (1)

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<sup>11</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Programs in the Early Primary Period," Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 39, citing "A Manual of Suggestions for the Use of the Elementary Schools of Ohio," Course of Study Series, 1923, Number 1, (Reading Department of Education, State of Ohio, Columbus: F. J. Heer Printing Company, 1923), p. 7.

It is the most economical form of reading. (2) Silent reading bears a close relationship to the other school subjects in that attainment in other subjects depends largely upon ability to read silently. (3) Training in silent reading constitutes a real preparation for life reading. (4) Silent reading develops interest because thought plays a prominent part.

Still continuing from Hyatt,<sup>13</sup> who this time quotes Gray, we find similar views expressed:

The discussion thus far has pointed out the facts that silent reading is of first importance both in regard to progress in school and in regard to the affairs of adult life, that silent reading is usually more rapid and effective than oral reading, and that the rapid reader is usually more efficient than the slow reader. These facts justify the conclusion that the school should give serious consideration to the problem of developing effective habits of silent reading.

With one exception, every teacher interviewed in this study reserved a portion of her curriculum for silent reading. The relative time devoted to silent reading has already been covered. As to the time of introducing silent reading into the curriculum, the answers were extremely varied, and the differences within classes of schools were as great as those between the classes.

Two teachers (1A and 3rC) brought silent reading into the curriculum the first month of school. Teacher 3rC said that it was brought in as a part of the reading readiness period. The early weeks, however, carried only a limited

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<sup>13</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 2, citing William S. Gray, "The Relation of Silent Reading to Economy of Education," Second Report of the Committee on Minimal Essentials in Elementary School Subjects, "Sixteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I," (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1917), p. 20.

amount of silent reading. Starting with the fifth month considerable emphasis was put on silent reading.

Six teachers introduced silent reading during the second month of school. Here, too, one teacher pointed out that silent reading at the first was lightly applied, much of it coming in the form of seatwork.

Four teachers used silent reading in the fourth month of school. One teacher remarked that some silent reading (through workbooks) was actually done before the fourth month. Two teachers mentioned the fifth month as the introductory period; one (2B-b), the seventh month; and another (2B-a) said that she didn't introduce silent reading in the first grade at all. Teacher 2B-b said that silent reading was only used slightly. and Teacher 2B-a implied some silent work was done in workbooks and seatwork even though it was never formally introduced.

#### The Teaching of Non-Use of Lips

Ten of the teachers demanded the non-use of lips right from the first; five teachers let the children use lips first and later discouraged it; and one said nothing about it one way or another, feeling that the children would drop lip-reading automatically when the reading mechanics were mastered. Making an issue of it, one teacher felt, would cause more trouble than good. Nine teachers, without much fanfare, merely called attention to the use of the lips and suggested that it should not be done. Six teachers appealed to lip-readers to imitate their fathers and mothers, and four teachers used games which

emphasized listening and watching games to see who was using lips. As far as such schemes as holding a paper between the lips were concerned, no teacher used them, all feeling that they would have done more to create a circus atmosphere than to have served as an effective aid to suppress articulation.

Other plans to break lip-reading included: (1) telling pupils not to whisper because it bothers others, (2) placing fingers on lips, (3) watching teacher, (4) appealing to children as "big now--above such a thing", (5) reminding pupils not to let anyone hear what they are reading, (6) listing names of "lip-readers" on board (no one wants his name in that list), (7) holding hand on lips and throat to check, (8) merely suggesting "keep lips quiet", and (9) asking pupils to read with eyes, not lips.

Teacher 3rD claimed some children knew how to read silently without lip-movement from the first. Teacher 3A supported the "make no issue of it" policy. Where one teacher claimed that any device used to break lip-reading was bad because it distracted from the business of reading, Teacher 3rC insisted that lip-reading slowed down reading and was a habit that must be broken immediately.

Checking back with the experts, this time Hildreth,<sup>14</sup> it is learned that:

To form the silent-reading habit, practice in silent reading should be given from the earliest lessons.

"Look and think, then respond" is the simple formula

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<sup>14</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., p. 88.

to eliminate articulation and reduce the tendency to vocalize. Telling the pupil not to talk as he reads or having him put his fingers on his lips after he has become habituated to oral reading is a less successful means of suppressing articulation.

### Checking On The Child To See That He Is Reading

Fourteen teachers used oral questions, and ten used seatwork with written questions on the text assigned for silent reading. Eight teachers had the children read the passage with the answer to the question, and six determined through discussion the quantity and quality of silent reading done.

Other means used were: workbooks, picking out favorite points of each story, reading to find an answer, making pictures of the story, dramatization, and (at the last part of the year) letting each child prepare a list of five questions on the story to ask the other children.

When asked what they did if a child was found to merely go through the motion of silent reading (skimming over, reading little, retaining nothing), eight teachers reported that they continued silent reading but with easier material, and eight others demanded that the passage be reread until the question could be answered. Appeal to pride was used by six teachers; two teachers merely reprimanded the child, while one abandoned silent reading for the moment in favor of a total oral reading program.

One teacher reported that she took it more slowly, sentence by sentence. Stress "attention" and "read aloud if can't answer" was the prescribed solution of another. Finding material

they will want to read, using material that is not too difficult, motivation through achievement charts with stars--these are other plans used. "Drill, drill, drill," was the answer according to one teacher. Another had the children play school, taking turns being the teacher. Two teachers attributed this inability to read silently to inattentiveness and laziness. Punishment was never mentioned, but one teacher did have the transgressors stay in awhile before their school bus was scheduled for the home run.

As far as handling silent and oral reading within the reading program was concerned, fourteen used oral in class and silent for seatwork. Twelve teachers combined oral and silent within and during the same class period, alternating from one to the other. Eleven had no fixed approach, but used either, whichever was convenient and most appropriate for the particular lesson. Seven teachers had separate classes for each.

Teacher 3C had her second graders read orally with the first graders. Teachers 3A introduced new words on the blackboard and drilled the class on them before the silent reading commenced. Teacher 1B had the children read ahead silently after the assignment had been covered orally, and Teacher 2A used all combinations interdependently, appealing differently to each child.

#### The Balanced Reading Program

With one, or perhaps two, exceptions, all of the teachers interviewed were willing to admit both oral and silent reading into the first grade reading curriculum. This appears



reasonable, and the opinions of the students of reading tend to substantiate this view. Hyatt<sup>15</sup> says in her book that excessive practice in either oral or silent reading may unbalance the reading program...Without the check on comprehension, oral reading may degenerate into word pronunciation and other formalities not related to understanding."

Likewise, Hildreth,<sup>16</sup> writing on the mutual relationship of oral and silent reading has this to say:

Today, both oral and silent reading are recognized as having a place in school activities beginning with the first reading lessons and continuing to the highest grade in the school; furthermore, the intimate relation between the two processes is now better understood. Children with normal hearing recognize word meanings in print from their background of oral word meanings. If they can think word meanings, it is because of the language foundation they have on entering school or that is developed after they enter. Oral reading is the basis for learning to think meanings in context reading.

Swinging over to non-oral reading exclusively represents a narrow approach and eliminates a meaningful link. It also omits the social elements in reading, the fun and pleasure of sharing stories with the group.

The issue between oral and silent reading disappears when initial reading lessons are based on the child's experience expressed in his own language. In this case, oral expression is the very foundation of the first lessons in associating meanings with print. Silent "looking and thinking" is required in the same lesson so that the child is forced to concentrate on meanings and not merely articulate a succession of speech sounds.

### III. COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is another one of those things that

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<sup>15</sup> Hyatt, op. cit., p. 73, citing Gertrude Hildreth, Learning the Three R's, (Philadelphia: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1936), p.127.

<sup>16</sup> Hildreth, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

teachers do a tremendous amount of talking about and children too frequently fail to master in their reading training. As a partial definition of the term, Reed<sup>17</sup> states that:

Psychologically, reading comprehension should be treated as a form of reasoning, or controlled thinking. The meaning of reading matter is given by the associations aroused by the words.

Continuing his discussion of the subject, Reed writes:

The degree of comprehension increases with the age and grade of the pupil. It increases also with the mental age and brightness of the pupil, and it has a tendency to be greater for rapid readers than for slow readers.

The comprehension of reading may be increased by the following procedures:

1. Substitute easy words for hard ones.
2. Emphasizing oral reading in the primary grades.
3. Giving advance questions on content.
4. Making advance explanations of content.
5. Giving motivated drill with directions requiring a response.
6. Giving printed directions for paper-cutting.
7. Reading with the intention of finding and retaining central thoughts.
8. Dividing a story into thought units after the meaning has been acquired.
9. Visualizing and naming parts in a story.
10. Sentence-completion exercises based on the thought of a story.
11. Finding the relation of the title to the central thought.
12. Finding solutions to problems raised by pictures, by the title, and by the opening sentence.
13. Systematic and supervised practice in which attention is given to the correction of the specific weakness found.
14. Systematic and supervised practice in which attention is given to the procedures listed above.
15. Intensive work on individual difficulties rather than extensive reading for general ideas and enjoyment.

For the causes of difficulties in interpretation, Reed<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Homer B. Reed, Psychology of Elementary School Subjects, (Chicago: Ginn & Company, 1938), pp. 67-68.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., citing William S. Gray, Remedial Cases in Reading: Their Diagnosis and Treatment, (No. 22 of the Supplementary Educational Monographs, Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1922), p. 66.

is quoted further:

1. A lack of training in intelligent interpretation.
2. Failure to direct attention to content while reading.
3. Inadequate or ineffective habits of thinking.
4. A narrow range of experience concerning the things referred to in selections.
5. Inadequate reading experience in certain types of selections, such as factual and problematic.
6. Immature language habits which resulted in failure to grasp the meaning of many commonly used forms of expressions.
7. An uncultivated imagination which resulted in reading into passages things which were not there.

Other causes of failure in interpretation are:

8. Difficulties in mechanics of reading.
9. Lack of interest in reading.
10. Inadequate learning capacity.
11. Careless habits of reading.
12. Inattention.
13. Lack of feeling of responsibility for the content.
14. Ineffective application.

It is significant that most of the causes of inadequate interpretation can be removed if effective methods of instruction are employed.

What was done at the fifteen schools of this survey to help the children in reading comprehension? Many things! However, the basic truth seemed to be recognized by many that before the child can understand, he must have a sufficient background of experience against which to evaluate and compare things read. In this relationship, three teachers indicated the need for reading material to parallel the child's personal experiences. Six teachers pointed out the need of discussion to further comprehension, and three teachers mentioned the importance of pictures in this matter of background building. Reading to find the answer for a specific question was considered important by five.

Herewith is a listing of the individual practices used to promote comprehension. Following each is a number that indicates the frequency of usage.

1. Discussion 6
2. In silent reading, read to find the answer to a specific question 5
3. Personalize the story by relating it to the experiences of the child 3
4. Pictures 3
5. Background building (readiness period for each story) 2
6. Easy reading 2
7. Explain all new words 2
8. Games 2
9. Story telling 2
10. Dramatization 1
11. Drill 1
12. Go slower 1
13. Motivate child so he will desire to find the answer 1
14. Patience and kindness 1
15. Praise 1
16. Read orally if answer cannot be learned through silent reading 1
17. Read for direction 1
18. Read to the children 1
19. Reread material until desired answer is found
20. Seatwork 1
21. Select reading within scope of child's experiences and imagination 1

Teacher 1A claimed that fluency and comprehension in reading were properly developed in the primary grades, but that the upper grades were failing in their reading instruction, causing the child at that level to back-slide in his reading ability.

The writer is of the opinion that oral reading warrants more consideration than does the silent. However, it appears that the schools of this survey emphasized oral to such an extent that silent reading was slighted. But, in oral or silent reading, it is comprehension that must be developed. According to the Reilly Primary Reading Test, the fifteen Western

Montana schools surveyed had a weakness in comprehension. The children of these schools should be strengthened in reading comprehension, and the writer believes that the suggested procedures of authority quoted in this chapter may be helpful in this respect. These suggestions utilized in a functional reading curriculum, wherein oral and silent reading are offered in a balanced program, may provide the answer to this deficiency.

## CHAPTER VII

### READING MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

The schools included in this survey apparently had sufficient material with which to work. It is possible that a few instances did exist where additional supplies of a desired, but not urgent, nature could have been advantageously used, but the essential reading materials were available. As far as the author could learn, no child was retarded because of the want of materials and supplies.

It is certainly important that an abundance of material be at hand for the use of the teacher because of the interest and motivation which it can bring to the learner. Reed<sup>1</sup> points this fact out when he says,

Learning to read may be motivated by appeal to such motives as inventiveness, curiosity, mastery, rivalry, the desire for approval, and desire for action. After the child has learned to read, there is no motive, either native or acquired, to which an appeal may not be made in reading. Probably the most effective method of motivating reading is to select materials that appeal to the reader's interest.

The qualities and features in reading that children in primary grades admire most are surprise, liveliness, dramatic action, animalness, conversation, humor, and plot.

The reading readiness workbooks have been discussed in Chapter IV, and all that will be added here will be the names of the publishers of these books. The Scott Foresman's

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<sup>1</sup> Homer B. Reed, Psychology of Elementary School Subjects, (Chicago; Ginn & Company, 1938), pp. 127-128.

"Before We Read" was the most popular. Next in popularity were the readiness books of John C. Winston Co. Other publishers whose books were used were Websters Publishing Co., Beckley-Cardy Co., Hall and McCreary Co., The Macmillan Co., E. M. Hale & Co., and the Follett Publishing Co.

Pre-primer reading charts were used in ten of the schools. Each of these schools used but one, except School 2A which used six, one for each week during the reading readiness period. These charts were made by Teacher 2A, and she reported that they had much interest appeal and were highly effective. These reading readiness charts were used by all of the first class schools and all the second class schools except 2B. Three of the four rural schools did not use the charts because the small enrollment did not warrant the expense, and not because of a hostile attitude toward them.

The reading charts reported used were those published by either John C. Winston Company or Scott Foresman Company. Only one school (3vA) reported the use of a "rack-chart" where on desired sentences and stories were built by the pupils and the teacher. Teacher 3rB, while not using a pre-primer chart, reported that she put her own charts on the blackboard.

When it came to the basal text, eight teachers reported that the Scott Foresman Company series were used; seven reported the John C. Winston Company series. One school used the set published by Row, Peterson and Company.

Besides these basic texts, (pre-primers, primers, and

readers.) other books listed as used were published by the American Book Company, The Macmillan Company, Bobbs-Merrill, Ginn & Company, Laidlaw Bros., Lyons and Carnahan, Allyn & Bacon, John C. Winston, and Scott Foresman.

As to the method of use of the basic series, different combinations were reported, though most of the schools used pre-primers, primers, and readers of the same series, the one following the other in logical sequence.

Adams et al<sup>2</sup> give some advice as to the proper usage of the basic reader:

When a good set of basic readers has been selected, it is desirable to continue with this series through the basic reading period. Thus, the pre-primer would be followed by the primer and later the first reader of the same series. A good set of basic readers is designed to feed words into the stories so gradually that the children find recognition easier than if they were asked to go from one vocabulary program to another in different series of readers. By using only one the children have a chance to develop a feeling of confidence and reading power. Competence in reading comes when children are not confronted with new words so rapidly that mastery becomes too difficult...Some authorities claim that thirty-five repetitions are necessary to achieve certain mastery of a new word.

Tables VIII, IX, and X (pages 84, 85, and 86, respectively) have a direct relationship to this question and may be consulted to learn the number of weeks of the school year allocated to the reading readiness book, the pre-primer, the primer, and the reader. Likewise, the number and length of the class periods, the volume of reading done, and the time spent with each type may be compared.

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<sup>2</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 196.



TABLE VIII

THE NUMBER OF WEEKS OF THE SCHOOL-YEAR ALLOTTED TO  
THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF FIRST GRADE READING  
IN THE FIFTEEN WESTERN MONTANA SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	LENGTH SCHOOL TERM	READING READINESS	PRE- PRIMER	PRIMER	READER
1A	38	3	7	12	16
1B	38	4	8	12	14
1C	38	5	9	8	16
2A	36	6	6	4	20
2B-a	36	6	8	10	12
2B-b	36	6	8	10	12
2C	36	8	6	6	16
3A	36	6	10	10	10
3B	36	4	8	10	14
3C	35	18	6	6	5
3vA	36	3	8	11	14
3vB	36	4	8	4	20
3rA	36	0	12	6	18
3rB	36	12	5	6	13
3rC	36	8	4	6	18
3rD	36	0	8	4	24

TABLE XIX

THE NUMBER AND LENGTH OF READING AND PHONICS PERIODS  
IN THE FIFTEEN WESTERN MONTANA SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NUMBER READING CLASSES DAILY	LENGTH OF CLASS PERIODS (IN MINUTES) FOR EACH FIRST GRADE OR READING GROUP			LENGTH OF CLASS OF CLASS PHONICS & WORD DRILL
1A	2	15	20		15
1B	3	20	20	20	15
1C	2	20	15		30
2A	2	20	20		15
2B-a	2	30	30		15
2B-b	2	15	25		15
2C	3	20	20	20	20
3A	3	15	15	15	15 <sup>1</sup>
3B	2	20	25		15
3C	3	30	30	30	10
3vA	2	15	15		15
3vB	2	25	25		15
3rA	3	20	20		15
3rB	2	20	20		10
3rC	2	20	20		20
3rD <sup>2</sup>	2	20	20		20

1 Phonics and spelling

2 Older children in upper grades aid first graders  
with their reading

TABLE IX  
THE NUMBER OF BOOKS READ  
IN  
FIRST GRADE READING  
IN THE FIFTEEN WESTERN MONTANA SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	PRE-PRIMERS	PRIMERS	FIRST READERS	SECOND READERS	TOTAL BOOKS
1A	6	5	3-5		14-16
1B	4	2	6-10		12-16
1C	3	1	3-4		7-8
2A	3	3-5	5-8		11-16
2B-a	3	2	6		11
2B-b	3	2	2-5		7-10
2C	3	3-5	2-7		8-15
3A	6	6	4-5		16-17
3B	5	3	3		11
3C	5-6	2	2-4		9-12
3vA	5	2	2-3		9-10
3vB	4	3	7-8		14-15
3rA	3	4	4	1	12
3rB	8	6	5		19
3rC	7	5	6		18
3rD	6	5	7-8	1	19-20

NOTE: This table should be read: At School 1A, the minimum amount of reading material read was 6 pre-primers, 5 primers, and 3 readers, or a total of 14 books; the maximum material read was 6 pre-primers, 5 primers, and 5 readers, or a total of 16 books.

TABLE XI  
THE NUMBER OF WORKBOOKS USED  
IN  
THE FIRST GRADES  
(READING READINESS WORKBOOKS EXCLUDED)  
IN THE FIFTEEN WESTERN MONTANA SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	READING	PHONICS	NUMBERS	OTHERS	TOTAL
1A	4	1	1	0	6
1B	4	1	1	0	6
1C	3	1	1	0	5
2A	4	1	1	0	6
2B-a	2	2	0	0	4
2B-b	2	2	0	0	4
2C	4	1	1	0	6
3A	3	0	4	0	7
3B	2	1	1	0	6
3C	2	1	2	0	5
3vA	3	1	3	0	7
3vB	5	1	3	0	9
3rA	2	0	3	0	5
3rB	6	1	2	3 <sup>1</sup>	12
3rC	1	1	4	1 <sup>2</sup>	7
3rD	6	1	1	0	8

1 General exercises for study period

2 Spelling and Penmanship

Table XI (page 87) indicates that workbooks were extensively used by all schools. The third class schools used an average of eight workbooks as compared to averages of five and six for the other class schools. In all cases, workbooks were probably used to excess. The greater use made of them by third class district teachers may be warranted, in part at least, by the many additional duties required of a teacher of a multi-grade classroom.

The use of workbooks must not become a substitute for teaching, or a form of busywork. In relation to this question, Hildreth<sup>3</sup> wrote that:

Workbooks have the advantage of being ready-prepared and of giving review on the reading lesson in the textbook. They are especially useful for developing and, at the same time, testing the basic reading skills. Typically, they provide material for checking comprehension, drawing or coloring related illustrations, testing word mastery, writing little summaries, and doing other things possible with consumable material.

In the first grade, the use of workbooks must be closely supervised and the pupils' responses should be conscientiously studied so that bad habits, poor techniques, and ignorance may be promptly detected.

In view of the fact that workbooks differ a great deal and may easily be misused, the teacher should understand the directions for using them and follow these directions closely in teaching.

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<sup>3</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Programs in the Early Primary Period", "Reading in the Elementary School", Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), pp. 83-84.

Teacher 3C was the only one that reported that library books were used in and as a part of the regular classwork, and she stated that they were used very little in this respect.

Moving picture projectors were available in nine of the schools visited. Five of these were located in first and second class schools, and the number of pictures shown annually at these schools were four, four, two, two, and one. All of the third class schools (12 year systems) had projectors, but 3C was the only one that used pictures in the first grade room. It showed nine pictures a year.

Of the third class schools (village and rural) only 3vA had a projector, and this school went all-out for pictures, showing eight a month! While school 3rB did not have a regular sound projector, it did have a machine to show film-strips. It had its own film library, and four of these films were shown to the whole school each month.

School 3rC was hopeful that the local Parent-Teacher Association would succeed in its campaign to buy a projector for the three schools in the district, school 3rC being one of the three. Likewise, School 3rD had launched a five year plan of school improvement which included the purchase of a projector.

Commercial picture dictionaries were used by seven of the sixteen classrooms interviewed. Of these, only two teachers (3vB and 3rD) believed them an effective aid to the learning of reading. The others said they are "too advanced", "not used much in first grade", "just a time killer." Teacher 3rB, who

did not use the picture dictionary, did use a wall vocabulary chart that she felt was a good phonetic aid.

There were eight schools that reported the use of the newspaper, My Weekly Reader. All of these, except School 2C, were third class schools. Two teachers said that they had only one copy for the room, whereas the others reported individual copies for each child. All reported favorably on the Reader; nearly all reserved one reading period a week for its use; and Teacher 3rB assigned topics to children who reported these before the rest of the class. It is probable that the administrations in first and second class schools felt the cost too great to supply the Reader themselves, and furthermore had not felt justified in asking the children to pay for their own subscriptions.

Only five teachers used Progress Charts in reading (1A, 2B-a, 2C, 3vB, and 3rC), and one of these (1A) had discontinued them because they "discouraged the slower people." Teacher 3vB and 3rC liked them, claiming they were good to encourage the children in volume of reading done, care in work, and their drilling programs.

The eleven teachers who did not use them indicated that they felt such devices discouraged the poor pupils. They added that "competition had no place in the first grade anyhow."

All teachers except four claimed that they used the blackboard extensively. Only one (2B-b) reported "little" use of blackboards, and she said that she would have used them much more had their condition warranted their use.

Not one teacher reported that she was bothered with

funnybooks. Funnybooks, apparently were not an issue at the first grade level in the schools.

One teacher (3vA), and only one, encouraged comic books, saying that they were not used during school hours but kept on hand for use during the noon hour, and before and after school.

Teacher 1A, 1C, and 2A took no stand on the issue.

Teacher 1A said that she personally knew a child who, in a progressive school system, had not learned how to read. It was the interest appeal and motivating force of comic books that ultimately inspired that child to develop ability in reading. She went on to say that comic books satisfied a need in literature that the school had failed to provide.

Teacher 1C said that the issue had never been brought up. Teacher 2A reported that the comic book was permitted in the school, but use of them during school hours was not allowed.

Six teachers discouraged the use of funny books, while six others banned them outright. Typical statements include: "Books are put away and sent home at night", "take them home!", "children are encouraged to read the funnies in the daily papers", "older children did bring them; the younger never did"; "won't have them; will destroy."

Teacher 3rB claimed that funny books were undesirable because they distracted attention and time from worthwhile books. While discouraging them, Teacher 3rC said there were good funny books available and these could be a genuine aid to learning.

Adams et al express some timely opinions in this field



that warrant consideration. Quoting authority,<sup>4</sup> they state in their book:

No discussion of reading and literature is complete without considering those arch enemies of good literary taste--the comic books. One study indicated that 70,000,000 Americans read comic books monthly, that 150 comic magazines sell 20,000,000 copies monthly to children ranging in age from 6 years to 11 years, and that 95 per cent of boys and 91 per cent of girls read comic magazines regularly. The same study showed that at the adult level (18 to 30) 41 per cent of the men and 28 per cent of the women read comic books regularly while 16 per cent of college students exhibit the same interest.

Continuing in the same vein, Adams et al<sup>5</sup> continue:

The problem of comic books is not that many children regularly read them; it is that a large and growing number read them to the exclusion of better types of recreational reading...

North,<sup>6</sup> also quoted in Adams et al, adds that:

Comics are badly drawn, badly written, and badly printed--a strain on young eyes and young nervous systems--the effect of those pulp-paper nightmares is that of a violent stimulant. Their crude blacks and reds spoil the child's natural sense of color, their hypodermic injection of sex and murder makes the child impatient with better though quieter stories. Unless we want a coming generation even more ferocious than the present one, parents and teachers throughout America must band together to break the comic magazines.

All indications are that adequate materials and supplies were available at all of the schools. While there may have been cases where desired supplementary materials could have been advantageously used had they been available, there

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<sup>4</sup> Harvey Zorbaugh, "The Comics--There They Stand," Journal of Educational Sociology, December, 1944, pp. 196-203, cited by Fay Adams, op. cit., p. 483.

<sup>5</sup> Adams et al, op. cit., pp. 483-484.

<sup>6</sup> Sterling North, Editorial in The Chicago Daily News, May 8, 1940, cited by Fay Adams, op. cit., p. 484.

were no cases, as far as this writer could discover, where the children were in anyway retarded because of a want of materials and supplies.

On the surface it appeared that workbooks were over-used. However, the writer refused to insist that such was the case. Instead, he would caution that the use of workbooks be done with proper guidance and sufficient instruction. In no case must the use of workbooks degenerate into mere busywork and become a substitute for genuine teaching.

## CHAPTER VIII

### READING, THE OTHER LANGUAGE ARTS, AND THE CURRICULUM

Before the child can read successfully, he must have an effective speaking vocabulary. This (more than anything else) will be the product of his home environment and his pre-school experiences. Reading, with language, writing, and spelling make up what is known as the language arts. In the primary room, reading and the other language arts develop simultaneously, and those make up the academic portion of the first grade curriculum.

All of the schools used the Montana State Course of Study, either in full or in part, and the goals and aims of primary reading therein expressed are presumably the objectives of the fifteen schools concerned in this paper.

Each school, as indicated in Table IX (page 85) had two or three daily class periods for reading. The length of these periods ranged from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes, with a median of twenty minutes. Besides these, all schools, except 3rD, had a class for phonics and word drill. The length of these periods ranged from ten to thirty minutes with a median of fifteen minutes. The writer is of the opinion that the child's interest span, which has been said to range from ten to twenty minutes, should be a considered factor in determining the length of the class periods.

Thirteen schools used content readers to supplement their regular reading material. Eight schools reported the use of science readers; eight used health readers; and number readers and citizenship readers were each reported used by three schools. Of these thirteen schools, six schools reported the use of one content reader; five, two readers; one, three readers; and one, four content readers. These content readers were invaluable as supplemental readers, reported Teacher 2B-a, in that their vocabulary is the same as that of the basal text published by the same company. She indicated that she thought extensive reading with one vocabulary was a safer route to successful reading than reading a number of unrelated books based on different vocabulary systems.

Teacher 1A, who reported no use of content readers, said that health booklets and posters were made by her reading class.

Hildreth,<sup>1</sup> believing that reading and language should be linked to the beginning reading lessons, writes that:

Children's understanding is broadened through hearing and taking part in conversation.

Through experience units, opportunities occur every day for children to hear and use the language of their reading text. Story-telling, talking in response to pictures,

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<sup>1</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Programs in the Early Primary Period," Reading in the Elementary School, Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), p. 76.

telephone conversations, little programs, and dramatizations make the reading text come alive for them. The pupils practice constructing sentences, trying to use the best words, improving their phrasing, and arranging their ideas in sequence. Through blackboard and chart work, readiness is established for written composition first by the group, then by individuals. The pupils' attention is called to sentences as soon as chart work begins. They are asked to point to a certain sentence on the chart. The word "sentence" is used in giving these instructions. Before long the pupils can be told that every sentence begins with a capital letter and usually ends with a period.

In line with these recommendations, the schools interviewed had done considerable in the field of primary language. Every one of the sixteen teachers of the fifteen schools reported that she had a program to cultivate speech and listening habits amongst her first graders.

All first class schools had formal class periods in first grade language, scheduled for 25, 30, and 15 minutes respectively. All the second class schools had scheduled classes in language, two rooms reporting 20 minute periods and two reporting 15 minutes.

Formal language classes were shown in the daily program of all of the third class schools except 3C and the third class schools herein referred to as village (v) and rural (r). School 3C, however, did schedule a class in spelling and writing. Within these schools the class periods ranged from 10 minutes up to 30, with a median length of class period of 15 minutes.

Four village and rural schools designated but one period (40 minutes in length) for language in all grades, first grade included. School 3vA had a fifteen minute language period especially for the primary grades, and School 3rA in

no way indicated that any language was offered the first grade class.

Training in speech was handled more or less incidently in ten school rooms. The other six reported a little formal drill, thus indicating a more deliberate or planned program of language instruction than incidental teaching.

Eight teachers regarded their handling of listening as an incidental proposition. Five teachers used a little drill, and three claimed listening was cultivated both incidentally and through a little drill.

Writing was taught through formal class periods in all cases. Eight teachers regarded their writing training as "much drill," and eight classified their writing in first grade as "little drill."

All schools except three reported formal training in spelling. School 2B reported no spelling training in both of its first grade rooms. Teacher 1C taught incidentally whatever spelling her children received. All other schools had regular class periods which had been started during the second-half of the school year. Eight teachers felt their spelling training to be a "little drill," and five reported their spelling in the first grade as "much drill."

Spelling and writing are generally regarded by authorities in reading as important to the first grader. Spelling should be brought in during the latter part of the first-half year, and writing should be introduced from the first. Spelling and writing are actual aids to many children in reading, as learning

may be achieved in part through vision, hearing, and the sense of feeling (writing and copying).

Hildreth and Wright<sup>2</sup> state that:

Practice in spelling and writing tend to reinforce and extend the child's consciousness and knowledge of words. Consequently we should provide as many opportunities as possible for writing and spelling in functional situations.

And, according to Gates,<sup>3</sup>

In the modern program in spelling and writing, considerable attention is usually given to the development of appropriate techniques of word study. Indeed in many ways the spelling lesson provides a more natural opportunity for training in word study and word analysis than does the reading lesson.

Eight teachers (all of the first class district teachers included) used manuscript and only manuscript writing. One of these (2C) reported that this was the first year that she had used manuscript writing and that it had resulted in greater legibility and better spelling. Teacher 3rB claimed that manuscript writing had meant better spelling; and Teacher 3rC credited it with neater writing and better reading.

Four teachers (2B-a, 2B-b, 3vB, and 3rA) taught both manuscript and cursive writing. Two teachers reported that manuscript was first taught and later cursive was introduced. Teacher 3rA introduced cursive with spelling at Christmas time, and Teacher 2B-a taught both systems of writing together at the same time.

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<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Hildreth and Josephine L. Wright, Helping Children to Read, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940), p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 293.

Four teachers (2A, 3A, 3vA, and 3rD) taught only cursive. Teacher 3A had had more success with cursive than manuscript. Teacher 3rD set out with manuscript, but the children wanted to write like the big children in the upper grades. Accordingly, she switched to straight cursive and had been successful by so doing. Writing was taught, in all cases, through varying combinations of formal class, seatwork, and the use of the blackboard.

Nursery rhymes were used in all of the schools. Reading, memorizing, and singing were each reported used in nursery rhyme work fourteen times. Twelve teachers used dramatization. Teachers 3rA and 3rD reported that the children knew all of the nursery rhymes when they started in the first grade. On the other hand, Teacher 3C reported a backward group of first graders who knew very few rhymes upon entry into school.

What are the values of nursery rhymes? Teacher 1A felt them to be a link between home and school as well as good for ear training. Teacher 2B-b reported them an effective aid in interest and memory improvement. Teacher 2C had her first graders recite these rhymes in front of the room and found it to be a successful socialization agency. "It aids in readiness and enjoyment of reading", said 3vA. Teacher 3vB credits to the use of nursery rhymes, the instilling in the beginning reader of rhythm, poise, and smoothness. "They remember longer and have a carryover value," said 3rB. Teacher 3rC said they aided rhythm and phonics.



As to the question of taking home the reader being used at the moment, thirteen permitted the book to be taken home only after completion. Three teachers (2B-b, 3rA, and 3rD) permitted them to be taken home anytime. Teacher 3A never let the readers be taken home because of the chances of loss and soiling. Teacher 2A, during the last half of the school year, permitted the child to take or not take home the book as he wished.

Permitting the child to take home the books after completion is regarded as good policy because children like to read to their parents. Also, to children who have been absent it is a means of getting caught up. The rereading of easy, familiar material may be an encouragement to the retarded reader.

How did these teachers feel about home-work and parent-help? Four of them encouraged it (2A, 2C, 3rC, and 3rD). Teacher 2C believed in the policy of letting the child read as much as he liked without driving him.

Six teachers (1A, 1B, 1C, 3B, 3C, and 3rA) condoned this policy only for remedial work. Teachers 1A and 1B remarked that children should be encouraged to take library books home. Teacher 3C cautioned against pressing home work too much lest interested be dampened. Three teachers (2B-a, 2B-b, and 3vB) took no stand on the issue, and three teachers (3A, 3rA, and 3rB) discouraged all homework and parent help. Teacher 3rA, however, would permit homework to help a child get caught up after illness or absence. Teacher 3rB said that home help was

not helpful under any circumstances. "Let the children take home library books," she said.

Dolch<sup>4</sup> believes that home help can be of value and suggests six ways of effective aid in reading. First, he would have the parents listen to the children reread the story, being careful to avoid scolding and criticism and giving the child a feeling of success. Second, children should be given help with the new words in the story. Third, it is in order that parents aid children in the mastery of the some two hundred basic sight words. Fourth and fifth, sound and comprehension can be drilled; sixth, parents can help the children retain reading skill over the summer vacation through encouraged reading in some children's periodical such as *The Weekly Reader*, *Story Parade*, or *Child Life*.

Every classroom had its schedule of daily classes posted, and in every case this program had become obsolete. That is, to meet the new needs and situations, alterations in the daily schedule had been initiated. That was as it should be, and, while no serious wrong had been committed, it appeared to the writer that keeping the daily program up to date should have been a part of good classroom administration.

The sixteen classrooms included in this survey appeared to have conducted their reading instructions along commonly accepted lines. The language arts (and arithmetic) made up

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<sup>4</sup> Edward William Dolch, A Manual for Remedial Reading, (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, Publishers, 1945), p. 165.

the overwhelming percentage of the academic portion of the curriculum, and reading was definitely emphasized in all of the fifteen schools. Even with reading commanding first consideration, the language arts did have a definite place, and in a number of cases reading and other language arts were coordinated, a practice advocated by many students of education.

## CHAPTER IX

### READING DIFFICULTIES AND CORRECTION

The child is required to make a major emotional adjustment in changing over from life at home with mother to school routine with its numerous frustrations. As if the changes in surroundings and personalities were not enough, a series of unfamiliar activities are thrown up to him for mastery. One of these is reading, and, according to Gates,<sup>1</sup> "Failure in reading is as serious in its consequences to children as financial or marital failure is to adults." Accordingly, there is within the child a frustration potential which may cause him trouble in his first year at school.

The teachers interviewed in this survey were asked to list the emotional difficulties that their first grade readers had experienced and to relate what had been done to solve them. Their answers to this question (abridged) follow in order of frequency:

1. Timidity 4 (times cited)
2. Parents and home environment 2
3. Speech difficulties 2
4. Changing from one school system to another 1
5. Cry easily 1
6. Excessive rivalry 1
7. Immaturity 1
8. Inferiority 1

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur I Gates, "The Role of Personality Maladjustment in Reading Disability," Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology, September 1941, p. 82, cited by Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949), p. 76.

9. Insecurity 1
10. Lack of church interest 1
11. Lack of concentration 1
12. Lack of interest 1
13. Nervousness 1
14. Stubbornness 1
15. Sulkiness 1
16. Report Cards 1
17. Restlessness 1

Teacher 1A was confronted with a problem that she felt strongly about. She said, "The parents are sometimes the biggest detriment. Report cards, the second. Parents expect all A's from their children, and this drives many of them into becoming nervous wrecks. Children need security of parental love, but most of them do not get it. I write letters home about the child, his achievements, and his problems."

Likewise, Teacher 3rB reported a situation that bears repeating. She said, "Eagerness. And this is difficult to handle as one doesn't want to dampen the spirit so much as to injure them. I try to have the eager child see that it would be nice to hear what Mary has to say, or if, perhaps, we should not see if John can find the answers, too."

It appeared that there were as many cures as there had been emotional difficulties. These practiced solutions, the writer felt, were generally acceptable, and they are listed below:

1. Gentleness and understanding
2. Patience and friendliness
3. Maintain a kind, friendly atmosphere
4. Give child self confidence through praise
5. Do not force child into an uncomfortable position
6. Ignore petty behavior
7. Encourage self expression
8. Give special help
9. Shorter periods
10. Place "problem-child" in the center of the group and bring him into the class discussion or activity

11. Give "helper" jobs to the timid or "problem" child
12. Encourage association with other children
13. Each case will have to be treated individually
14. Dramatization
15. Phonics exercises (speech difficulties)
16. Use picture and discussion to relate story to child's personal experiences
17. Parent talks
18. Write letters home about the children, on his achievements and problems

The above reports on emotional problems arising in connection with the teaching of reading are many and varied. The problem is one of finding out what the difficulties are so that the child can be aided in surmounting them. To give this help teachers should understand the child's normal desires and his natural behavior patterns. Remmers and Gage<sup>2</sup> have prepared a list of five normal behavior reactions that are common to the normal, adjusted child:

1. The desire for social approval: Favorable attention, sympathy, companionship, conformity to the mores, customs and fashions of one social group are all basic needs of pupils. Social approval is one of the most powerful forces by which personality and behavior are determined.

2. The desire for security: The feeling of being wanted, of being assured that one's presence and contribution are welcome, the need for stable affection from family and personal relationships, all constitute another important category of human motivation. The origin of this desire, in the physiological needs and the love responses of the infant, is strongly related to, but not identical with the derivation of the need for social approval.

3. The desire for individuality: The need to assume adult responsibility, to take up obligations and become independent of the family's material and emotional support, to attain adult individuality or self-integration, is a motive derived largely from the needs of society. The continuously recurring truth that today's children must soon run the world has caused this desire for independence and responsibility to become an integral part of the human make-up.

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<sup>2</sup> H. H. Remmers and N. L. Gage, Education Measurement and Evaluation, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1943), p. 72, cited by Ibid., pp. 115-116.

4. The desire for mastery: The urge to excel, to succeed, to overcome obstructions, to defeat a rival, to achieve a goal, to solve a problem, to dominate a situation are all manifestations of this type of motive. Success and mastery along some lines of endeavor are essential to the emotional well being of everyone.

5. The desire for new experience: Exploratory patterns curiosity, inventiveness concern with the fresh, the strange, and the unfamiliar, all seem to be a basic need of human beings. A fixed routine in time or space can be followed for only a relatively small segment of one's lifetime before this urge toward novelty becomes irrepressible.

Nor do reading difficulties find all of their sources in emotional frustrations originating in the changeover from home to school routine. Emotional disturbances that distract from reading effectiveness may have their beginnings in physical handicaps. McKee<sup>3</sup> declares that the beginning reader:

...may be delayed seriously by physical handicaps and emotional disturbances. The commonest physical handicaps are (1) poor general health, (2) poor vision, (3) poor hearing, and (4) mispronouncing of words. Among the emotional disturbances are those connected with maladjustments in the home, in the school, and in other social situations. Although many boys and girls with all sorts of physical handicaps and emotional disturbances have learned to read well, and although these conditions are detrimental to the learning of almost anything taught in school, no one denies that they can retard normal development of readiness to learn to read. There is good reason, therefore, for the teacher to discover handicaps and disturbances among her pupils as soon as possible and to do whatever she can to secure the removal of those conditions.

Physical difficulties such as these were reported by thirteen teachers interviewed in this survey. In other words there were only three teachers (3rA, 3vB, and 3rD) who reported no physical handicaps. The fact that all three of these

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<sup>3</sup> Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School, (Boston:Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), pp. 170-171.

teachers came from rural schools loses some of its significance when it is realized that only ten first grade children came from these three schools.

Four teachers each reported but one defect; five teachers, two physical handicaps; one teacher, three; and three, four defects. Leading the handicapped conditions was speech impediment which was listed nine times. Faulty eye sight came second, being noted seven times. Subnormal mentally was mentioned four times; faulty hearing, three times. Other deterrents to successful reading that were mentioned included: baby talk, immaturity, inadequate background or inexperience, and accent. These can hardly be classified as physical defects.

Thirteen schools reported a health service that included a school nurse. Four schools indicated but one annual visitation by the nurse; one school semi-annual; five schools, monthly; and three schools, weekly. The three schools that reported no nurse or health service were 3vA, 3vB, and 3rD. School 3vB, however, does benefit by a scheme for dental aid.

The initial physical check-up at the beginning of the school year indicated that sixteen children needed glasses in eleven classrooms. The pupils in five classrooms did not need glasses (3B, 3rA, 3rB, 3rC, 3rD). When this survey was made toward the close of the school year ten of these sixteen children had received glasses, leaving six children who had been pronounced in need of glasses but still without them. These six children needing glasses came from: School 2B, 1 child; 2C, 2 children; 3vA, 2 children; and School 3vB, 1 child.



Very little was found in the way of provisions for work in remedial reading. Twelve schools reported that the only remedial reading done was that done by the teacher herself. Four schools stated that nothing was done. Three schools took advantage of facilities of the Montana State University Speech Clinic. School 1B declared that it had no need for any work in remedial reading. Teacher 1A indicated that her administrator planned to employ a remedial teacher for the ensuing year. Teacher 2A gave help after school to children in need of remedial reading. Only three teachers reported that they did not use assignments for home work as remedial work. These were Teachers 3A, 3vB, and 3rB.

In closing this portion of the survey report, a timely commentary on remedial reading is quoted. Adams et al<sup>4</sup> add five of their own corrective procedures. These, according to the authors, are applicable irrespective of the teaching plan used:

1. A basic reading ability should be built up so that the child gradually gains strength in comprehensive reading power.
2. a sight vocabulary must be developed;
3. easy reading on a level below the child's reading ability usually yields excellent results.
4. The learner should be given some method of independent word attack, and;
5. he should have opportunity to read a considerable amount of material which he writes himself and which is based on his own experience.

The question of reading difficulties and correction is by itself a subject broad enough to fill several volumes. This study was confined to emotional and physical difficulties that cause reading difficulties. The solutions to these problems

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<sup>4</sup> Adams, op. cit., p. 403

must have been a highly individualized matter, as one teacher has pointed out. The proposed solutions to these reading difficulties appear to be reasonable. While they may not include all of the proposals of the reading experts, those that have been cited surely can qualify as an acceptable part of the whole.

## CHAPTER X

### EVALUATIONS AND PROMOTION POLICIES

#### I. GRADING SYSTEMS

Nine teachers, over one-half the number interviewed, used grades as means of motivating the child in reading; six did not; and one teacher submitted no reply. There appeared to be no one definite pattern in systems of grading that could be said to be characteristic of any particular class of school district.

Teacher 1A, who did not use grades for motivation, said that to her "the child has completed the work or he has not." "If the child is normal," she goes on, "and attends school regularly, it is definitely my fault if he doesn't pass. Love, pats, and petting are the best encouragement. I let the child know that I expect his best, and he usually cooperates."

Teacher 3rB did not motivate through the use of grades either, stating that she felt that they tended to make a slow reader feel inferior.

Other teachers used grades in various ways. Teacher 1C sometimes asked the class, as a whole, to appraise the achievement in oral reading of a fellow classmate by use of the letters A, B, C, and D. Teacher 2A used charts to show individual achievement from day to day, but she did not compare any one child with the other children. Teacher 2C used U meaning "not working to full capacity", S meaning "satisfactory", and I meaning "improvement is shown."

Two teachers apparently clung to the old school of thought. Teacher 3vA said that she encouraged the children to try for an A or 100. However, she did always tell them that their work was good and their grades passing. "My little ones are very grade conscious," she put it. She used stars, too. Different colors designated different grades. The children "loved to get stars." It "motivated them." Teacher 3rC did or did not use grades to motivate, depending upon the child. If the child was careless and lazy, she "motivated" with grades.

As to the system of grades reported, the fifteen schools fell into three general patterns. Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory (S and U) appeared to be the most popular with seven schools using it. Three of these schools used VS to indicate excellent work. One of these used a plus (+) and minus (-) with the S and U. The plus meant "improvement of achievement" and the minus, "diminution of achievement." All of the rural schools used this system of reporting.

Five schools used the A, B, C, D, and F system. One of these used the plus and minus to report varying shades of accomplishments.

Three schools, the first class schools from the one first class district, used a system of A, B, C, D, and E over S or U. The S indicated that the particular letter received was satisfactory for that child. If the child received a mark of C/U, it would show that the teacher was unsatisfied and believed that the child could do better. The E was used in place of the F. E was meant as more of a warning of pending trouble than notice

of a definite failure. On the report card key, E was reported as meaning "failing."

Teacher 2B-a had found it a practical policy to start with grades low enough to leave sufficient room for indicating improvement.

The three first class schools under the one administration reported the progress<sup>c</sup> of the children to the parents quarterly. These quarters ran at 10, 9, 9, and 10 weeks respectively.

All of the other schools had six week terms, six terms to the school year.

Thirteen of the schoolrooms used cumulative records; three did not. Two of these three, however, did keep individual health records.

Thus far only actual practices have been reported. At this point the convictions of the sixteen teachers interviewed as to the "model system of grading" will be aired. As in so very many things in this world, these teachers seemed unable to arrive at one acceptable grading system. There were, in fact, five suggested systems. The most popular was the Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory pattern, four teachers subscribing. One of these four teachers would augment the S-U with an I to indicate "improvement." Three teachers would use the letter-report to parents, and two recommended a letter and parent-interview combination. Two teachers advocated the letters A, B, C, D, and F with the plus and minus. One of the teachers would establish a grade at the beginning of the year, and then, on individual charts, indicate progress by means of a graph.

Teacher 1A submitted this plan, "Less testing and more respect for children. Informal letters should be written to parents on the child's commendable traits and habits as well as on his problems and undersirable habits. Use parent-teacher conferences. The child's faults are mostly parents' faults. Traditional grading is as much an evaluation of the teaching, and the teacher, as it is of learning, and the learner."

Teacher 3rB claimed that parents put too much stress on grades and not enough on achievement. She would use written reports and not letters or the Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory system.

Teacher 3rA would use A, B, C, D, and F without plus or minus because S and U do not stimulate the average child to do better; Teacher 3rD would use S and U because there are too many factors entering into the picture to use numbers or letters in grading.

## II. TEACHERS' EVALUATIONS OF PUPILS' READING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a part of the interview, the teachers were asked to evaluate their first grade children, according to what they felt should be achieved in first grade reading. These fifteen school interviewed and tested had a total enrollment of 289 first graders. It was because of absenteeism caused by illness and other things that only 262 children were present and tested in this survey. According to the teachers' evaluations of the 289 children, 224 (77.5%) were declared Satisfactory and 65 children (22.5%) were Unsatisfactory (See Table XII, page 114).

TABLE XII

EVALUATIONS OF PUPILS' READING ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
 BASED ON THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER'S OPINION  
 AS TO WHAT SHE BELIEVED SHOULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED  
 BY HER CLASS IN FIRST GRADE READING

SCHOOL	NO. IN CLASS	CLASSIFICATION A		CLASSIFICATION B		
		SATIS- FACTORY	UNSATIS- FACTORY	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE
1A	36	32	4	7	19	10
1B	30	29	1	15	14	1
1C	29	23	6	9	14	6
2A	17	2	15	2	9	6
2B-a	29	21	8	1	20	8
2B-b	28	20	8	3	17	8
2C	46	38	8	5	32	9
3A	28	22	6	15	7	6
3B	9	7	2	2	5	2
3C	15	8	7	3	7	5
3vA	5	5	0	3	2	0
3vB	4	4	0	3	1	0
3vA	4	4	0	1	3	0
3vB	2	2	0	0	2	0
3vC	3	3	0	2	1	0
3vD	4	4	0	3	1	0
TOTALS	289	224	65	74	154	61
PERCENTS	100%	77.5%	22.5%	25.6%	53.3%	21.1%

Note: Each teacher was asked to appraise her own children on the basis of what she felt they should have accomplished in first grade reading. These ratings were made, first, between Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory, and, second, between Above Average, Average, and Below Average.

When asked to appraise these same children according to Above Average, Average, and Below Average, these teachers stated that 74 of the children (25.6%) were Above Average; 154 (53.3%), Average; and, 61 (21.1%), Below Average.

By either classification, over twenty per cent of the children were either Unsatisfactory or Below Average. While recognizing that reading difficulties are a normal situation the nation over and not something peculiar to Western Montana, the writer still believes that a study should be made into this dilemma to learn the cause. What can be done to help these children that make up this twenty per cent? Were the causes learned, it is possible that a corrected program of initial reading instruction could in the future remove at least a part of the trouble. Remaining difficulties, on an individual basis, could be helped by corrective or remedial reading. This is a major problem in American education today, and each school reporting Unsatisfactory or Below Average first grade readers should bend every effort to learn the causes and activate a program of solutions.

If additional proof is required to establish the case that a definite problem in reading does exist, the results of the Reilley Primary Reading Test given in this survey supply that proof. In this testing program children who achieved grade equivalents of 1.0 to 1.5, inclusive, were, for the purposes of this study, termed Critically Retarded Readers. Out of the 262 tested, 48 children (17 girls and 31 boys), or 18.3 per cent, were included in this category. This test, in the opinion of



the writer, confirms the appraisals of the teachers as explained above.

The schools that appeared to have been the least successful in their reading instruction, according to the Reilley Primary Reading Test, were 3B, 3C, 2B-b, 2C, and 3A. These schools had more critically retarded readers, proportionately, than the others. School 3B had 4 children out of 9 place in this 1.0 to 1.5 bracket; School 3C, 6 out of 14 (42.9%); 2B-b, 11 out of 26 (42.3%); 2C, 11 out of 45 (24.4%); and 3A, 4 out of 23 (17.4%).

It is here suggested that the complete instructional program of reading be analyzed, corrected if found deficient, and then applied so as to meet the needs of those children who at present are not mastering the reading skill. This is urgent, and it is an issue that appears to need correction now.

### III. GROUPING OF CHILDREN

Eight teachers retained their first grade class as one group. These eight included every school, except 3C, in the third class districts. This seems to imply that size of class was a factor in the matter of grouping as done among these fifteen schools.

Of the eight who use grouping as a means of class control, six divided their groups into three groups each and two others into two groups each. In every case where grouping was practiced, the division was based on ability as determined by the teacher's observation. This observation embraced any and

everything from reading readiness to general aptitude. Teacher 3A pointed out that her groups were fluid. Children were shifted from group to group as their ability warranted.

Before leaving the problem of grouping, the question as to how School 2B determined which children should be placed in Rooms 2B-a and 2B-b is brought up for consideration. This was done on the basis of a reading readiness test at the beginning of the year. Later comers, however, were "filled-in" more or less to maintain a numerical balance between the two rooms.

The names used to designate the groups warrant mention, and nothing more. Teachers 2A and 3C used no special names, and Teacher 1B abandoned the names originally introduced because the children regarded them as "elementary." Names used were Fairies, Squirrels, and Birds; Fairies, Brownies, and Elfs; Fast Rabbits and Brownies; Robins and Bluebirds; Marines, Army, and Navy.

As to grouping and names, Adams et al<sup>1</sup> would develop the groups by removing the children from the reading readiness program as they were qualified. Three groups were recommended. These writers go on to say:

This matter of nomenclature, it may be said in passing, has led to ludicrous practices in the past. As if "Brownies, Elves, and Fairies" were not indirect enough names for reading groups, one teacher designated hers as the "Weeds" and "Flowers" respectively.

Betts<sup>2</sup> has summarized the major advantages of a grouping

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<sup>1</sup> Fay Adams, Lillian Gray, and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read, (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1949).

<sup>2</sup> Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties, (New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1936), pp. 44-45.

program as follows:

- a. Better adjustment of the curriculum to individual needs.
- b. Increased interest on the part of the learners
- c. More opportunities for development of individual initiative and independence.
- d. More opportunity for learning to work with groups
- e. Possibility of higher individual achievement for specific skills and more material can be covered
- f. Creation of more opportunities for the use of reading skills in real situations
- g. More opportunities for individual participation
- h. Greater possibilities for the development of good listeners as well as good leaders
- i. Reading is conceived to be a means to an end

The issue of grouping is dropped again, by citing Betts,<sup>3</sup> this time using his statements to answer relevant questions pertaining to this subject:

What is a logical basis for grouping?

One of the primary considerations in grouping is the instructional reading level of the child. Significant variation in abilities may be expected within a group. Other things being equal, the vocabulary burden of the material is one of the chief considerations in guiding group reading. Within a given reading group, the child with the lowest level of reading ability should encounter no more than one "new" word in 20 running words. The best reader in the group may find only one "new" word in 80 or 100 running words. This criterion along with other considerations provides a reasonable working range for the members of a group.

A second primary consideration in grouping is the general interest level of the children. Relatively mature children do not like to read "baby books." Interest must be challenged. It is as crucial to begin with the interest level of the child as it is to begin with his level of reading ability.

The specific needs of children afford a third basis for grouping. These needs may embrace language skills, concepts, critical reading, social adjustment, or other learnings, varying all the way from word recognition to organization of information.

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<sup>3</sup> Emmett A. Betts, "Adjusting Instruction to Needs," Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), pp. 277-278.

What is a reasonable number of groups?

First-grade entrants usually present three states of language development: prereading readiness, reading readiness, and initial reading. This situation calls for a minimum of three groups. Before the end of the year a maximum of four or five groups may be organized.

What is the desirable size for the group?

In general, the size of the group depends upon the number of children with common interests and needs. For example, the size and number of the readiness groups in the first grade are gradually reduced as the children complete the transition to the initial reading group. At the first-grade level, each group may have five to ten members, depending upon the size of the class and other factors. As more independence is achieved, the size of the reading group is increased.

Once grouped, should it be a final or flexible proposition?

Within a group, children will progress at varying rates. Furthermore, a retarded reader in a given group may progress rapidly and out distance other members who are limited both in the language and experience facets of concepts. For these and other reasons, it is advisable to maintain somewhat tentative groupings. The child's needs should dictate how long he remains in a given group.

Grouping should be flexible in another sense. Special aptitudes may place a child with one group of children for basic reading instruction and another group in science or mathematics. At no grade level should assignment to a reading group govern assignment to groups in other types of activities.

The transfer of a child from one group to another should be weighed carefully. Most children require the security established by membership in a compatible group. Uncertain shifting from one group to another promotes instability. Both time and intelligent guidance are necessary to insure adequate adjustment.

Every school interviewed had established a testing program of some kind to aid in making a valid appraisal of reading achievement. In that this testing program has been partially outlined (see Table VII, p. 22), only a summarizing account has been made here. Only one school conducted an intelligence test, and not one school gave a diagnostic test. Achievement

tests were given in all but two schools.

Disregarding reading readiness tests, the inadequacy of the testing carried on in the sixteen school rooms surveyed can be realized when it is learned that only one room (2A) conducted two standardized tests, thirteen school reported giving one formal test, and two school (3B and 3vA) offered no testing program whatsoever.

#### IV. PROMOTION POLICIES

Before going into the philosophies of the individual teacher as to passing or failing the child, or the probable number which they expected to promote and fail in the individual schools at the close of the current year, it would be desirable to discover how many of the two hundred eighty-nine children were repeaters.

This was the second year in the first grade for nineteen children. Ten of these children were in first class schools; five, in second class schools; and four, in third class schools. Third class village and rural schools reported no repeaters. School 1A had the most, six.

When asked if this experience of retardation had been helpful to these nineteen children, the following opinions were expressed. Teacher 1A supposed that the six children concerned in her room would now always be problem children. With one of these children it was a case of making physical adjustment; with another it was merely immaturity. Presumably, each of these children benefited by the return engagement.

Teacher 2C believed that a limited but satisfactory amount was being accomplished this second year and, therefore, felt that it was a helpful experience for the three children involved.

It should be noted that in every case, these schools conducted their promotion policy on a one-year basis, that is to say, the child was promoted grade by grade instead of semester by semester.

The teachers were asked to state their views as to what their experience suggested as the best promotion policy, considering the child's academic, emotional, social, and personal welfare.

In response to this, nine of the teachers said that they would regard the matter of promotion mainly as a matter of academic achievement. Two of these, however, would not retain any child for more than two years in any grade under any circumstances.

Five teachers would, by one means or another, establish a rule that the child be promoted one grade each year. Two of these teachers urged that beginning children be refused admission until, by means of a standard reading readiness test, they proved ready to start reading or until they attained the age of compulsory attendance. This exclusion of immature children, they felt, would remove most of the cause for failure. That done, they believed it best to promote the child one grade each year. Two of these teachers would settle the question by determining what is best for the child.

This study revealed some significant facts relative to entry requirements. The reading authorities generally recommend that beginning first graders, in the interest of eliminating immaturity as a cause for retardation, be withheld from entry and reading instruction until the age of six and one-half years, with six years often set as a minimum entry age. Further, immaturity was, more often than any other, cited as the reason for retardation in the first grade.

The writer was contemplating the recommendation of a ruling that would bar all children from entering the first grade until the age of six, or six and one-half years, had been reached. Before so doing he looked into the records to learn the actual achievement status of the children who were admitted to these fifteen survey-schools at the age of five years. Thirty-one of these five year olds were known to have attended these fifteen schools and to have taken the Reilley Primary Reading Test. Of these, one rated a grade equivalent of 2.9 or higher; 21 scored grade equivalents of 1.9 to 2.8, inclusive; 5 established grade equivalents of 1.6 to 1.8, inclusive (the category rated "marginal" in this survey); and 4 received grade equivalents of 1.0 to 1.5, inclusive (the "critically retarded" segment within this study). In other words, only 12.9 per cent of the five year old first graders rated "critically retarded" compared to 18.3 per cent for the all-age group. Thus, this survey did not reveal sufficient justification for the banning of all five year old children from school admission.

However, abandonment of the six year age entry require-

ment did not exclude the recommendation for a reading readiness test for all incoming first graders of all ages. Immaturity can be a problem with six year olds, or even seven year old children, as well as five year olds. Children develop at different rates, and a reading readiness test would catch immaturity and other deterrents to reading achievement at every age level.

Teacher 1A said that she did not believe that any teacher had the right to fail a child who had attended school and who had been well. "To me," she wrote, "it is just like telling a child to live over one year of his life. If I could not teach the child in question, then I had better let someone else try."

Teacher 3C would settle the question of promotion or non-promotion on the basis of what is the best for the child, physically, academically, emotionally, socially, and personally.

This question of promotion or non-promotion is so vital, the writer feels, that the views of the experts in reading warrant consideration.

Gray,<sup>4</sup> reviewing the recommendations of the Committee on Reading, declares that "non-promotion merely because of difficulty in reading can no longer be defended."

Hildreth and Wright,<sup>5</sup> after studying into the question of reading failure, came forth with some definite ideas as to

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<sup>4</sup> William S. Gray, "A Decade of Progress," Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1937), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Gertrude Hildreth and Josephine L. Wright, Helping Children to Read, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940), p. 12.



the underlying causes. They write:

Reading failure was often only a small part of general failure.

Aside from specific failures in skills, such as identifying and sounding word parts, or recalling the meaning of a word, the children as a group had two major troubles. First, they were afraid to try.

This situation seemed to be due to two causes: first, the conventional, mechanical methods by which most of the children had been taught, which allowed little time and opportunity for repeat trials; and second, fear of punishment associated with trials that resulted in error.

The second major handicap under which these children suffered, one that appears to be indirectly related to the first, was a tendency to show fatigue at the slightest mental exertion. They were extremely tense when doing any seat work, such as reading or writing.

In the teaching of reading today, the new concept seems to be to regard the primary grades as one continuous period rather than as three separate compartments. Accordingly, the child is automatically passed each year, reading training becomes continuous, and instruction becomes individualized.

Hildreth<sup>6</sup> says:

Teachers are advised to consider the primary period as a continuous instead of three separate and sharply defined grades with fixed standards of achievement for the end of each grade. The pupils are not all expected to have reached the same level at the end of the first year. Instead, they all move steadily ahead without having to repeat work that was too difficult or inappropriate for them in the first place. Continuity is established with the next grade level at the beginning of the next term to insure steady progress.

The first-grade teacher makes every effort to keep the child moving ahead even though he is slow and beginnings seem slight. The next teacher (often the same teacher

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<sup>6</sup> Gertrude Hildreth, "Reading Programs in the Early Primary Period," Forty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education, 1949), pp. 91-92.

moving along with the class) continues the same policy. Children are helped in every way to succeed even though indications of success vary with the capacities of the individual pupils.

Today a larger share of responsibility for teaching slow beginners is placed in the second grade. With continuous progress instead of failure, many of these slow learners will be found working at a more accelerated pace during the second year. In this way, by the end of his second year the slow pupil is ahead of the point he would have reached had he "failed" at the end of the first grade, even though his achievement at that time is still not equal to that of the better pupils in the second grade.

If the newer practice of continuous promotion each year prevails and pupils are kept with their age groups, so far as practicable, then teachers can feel that they have time during all the primary years to study pupils and adapt instruction to individual needs.

There is no guarantee, even in retardation, that the child will learn to read. But worse than that, writes Gates,<sup>7</sup> "There is much evidence that failure in school is a major catastrophe to many children and that general maladjustments are a frequent consequence."

On the basis of research on the question of promotion and non-promotion, Cook<sup>8</sup> found that failing a child accomplished none of its declared objectives. A part of his findings follow:

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur I. Gages, The Measurement and Evaluation of Achievement in Reading, "The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, (Bloomington, Illinois Public School Publishing Company, 1937), p. 205, cited by Ada V. Hyatt, The Place of Oral Reading in the School Program, (Teachers College Contributions to Education, No. 872, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943), p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> W. W. Cook, Grouping and Promotion in the Elementary School, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1941), cited by A Guide For Better Instruction In Minnesota Schools, (Curriculum Bulletin Number 1, St. Paul: State of Minnesota Department of Education, 1946), pp 66-67.

The constant threat of failure in schools with high failure rates did not result in higher achievement.

Cook found no significant differences between trial promotion and failure and he concluded that a pupil's achievement did not depend so much on whether he was passed or failed, but it did depend upon whether the teacher adjusted instruction to his ability and level of achievement.

When grade groups overlap as much as eight years, a pupil who is failed one, two, three, or four years does not become even an average achiever in his new group. He simply continues to be a failure among pupils who are his chronological inferiors. The low pupils in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades have more in common than any one of those pupils has with the average pupil in his grade.

Discouragement and failure only breed more discouragement and failure among slow-learning pupils. To the gifted child failure may be a stimulating experience, but to the slow-learning pupil every failure is a confirmation of his growing belief that he is no good and that there is no use in trying.

When the teachers were interviewed, during the last month of the school year, they were asked to give their opinion on the question of the number of children that would probably be promoted to the second grade and those that would probably be retained in the first. Out of the total 289 children, these sixteen teachers reported it probable that 258 (89.3%) would be passed and 31 (10.7%) were to be failed (See Table XIII page 127). The inability to read was in all cases the major cause for non-promotion. Even after passing seventeen of the forty-eight children who, in this study, were pronounced critically retarded, thirty-one others were to be failed. The greatest number of these retardations, proportionally, were reported from School 3A, School 3B, and School 3C--all

TABLE XIII

TEACHERS' ESTIMATES OF PROBABLE PROMOTION  
OF THE FIRST GRADE PUPILS  
AT THE FIFTEEN SCHOOLS SURVEYED

SCHOOL	NUMBER IN CLASS	PROBABLE NUMBER	
		PROMOTED TO SECOND GRADE	RETAINED IN FIRST GRADE
1A	36	34 <sup>1</sup>	2
1B	30	29	1
1C	29	25	4
2A	17	15	2
2B-a	29	28	1
2B-b	28	24	4
2C	46	41	5
3A	28	20	8
3B	9	7	2
3C	15	13	2
3vA	5	5	0
3vB	4	4	0
3rA	4	4	0
3rB	2	2	0
3rC	3	3	0
3rD	4	4	0
TOTALS	289	258	31
PER CENT	100%	89.3%	10.7%

1 One child included here was to be "advanced." That is, he had not measured up academically, but his size and age were such that he was to be unconditionally passed anyhow.

from the same class school district! School 3A planned to fail 8 out of a first grade class of 28, or 28.6%; School 3B, 2 out of 9, or 22.2%; and School 3C, 2 out of 15, or 13.3%.

It is recognized that children must learn how to read. However, it does seem an undesirable practice to compel a child to repeat one complete school year when he sees his classmates pass on into the second grade. If there were reason to believe that this retention would correct the reading deficiency, there may then have been some useful purpose served; but, as far as the writer knows, research does not prove that to be the case. When a child has failed once, twice, or more, he, too, is convinced that he is a failure; and in this state of mind, he surely will fail, and probably not only academically. This non-promotion lets loose a whole chain reaction of unfavorable emotional developments that may leave life-long scars in the child's personality.

The writer does not insist, however, that the policy of non-promotion be ruled out, but urges a minimum use of the practice and recommends that every alternative be examined to find other ways out of the dilemma before condemning the child to repeat.

What appears to be the best suggestion that this study has uncovered in dealing with this non-promotion policy in face of reading inability is that the primary grades be thought of as one continuous unit of instruction rather than three separate compartments. It is natural that some children learn slowly and some rapidly; some mature early, and others late.

Under the suggested scheme, these individual differences are bridged by keeping the instruction continuous and passing the child at the close of each successive year. To the writer this appears to be the answer to a vexing and genuine problem.

The second suggested answer to this problem of non-promotion is a mere restatement of what has been said before. By the use of reading readiness tests, immature children can be excluded from first grade instruction until a later date when they possess the required maturity. This would avoid the problem by not letting it start in the first place.

In the case of non-promotion, the final decision was made by the teachers alone in seven of the sixteen cases in this survey. In three cases, the teacher with the administrator (principal or superintendent) gave the final verdict. In six cases, the teacher and principal called in the parents concerned before taking final action in retarding a child.

The causes for these thirty-one probable non-promotions were attributed by nine teachers to immaturity; by four teachers, to inability; by three teachers, to illness; by two teachers, to "problem" children. Two teachers planned on failing children because of absenteeism caused by factors other than illness. Health-conditions, lack of background experiences, failure in attention and application, and emotionalism were each listed once.

Consider for one moment one of these thirty-one cases of non-promotion, the case of a child failed because of emotionalism. Here is his case. This child was to be failed because of emotional instability. To begin with, his home environment

was classified as "bad." Secondly, his father had died during the course of the school year. Finally, he was not doing very well in reading to start with. These three factors together added up to an emotional state. As the end of the school year drew near, the child was admittedly weak in reading as well as other school work, and his teacher planned to fail him because of emotionalism.

The questions that plagued the writer were two: First, would this course of action solve the child's reading difficulties and emotional state? Or, second, would it be the knock-out punch coming when the child is near the point of being overwhelmed, giving him that final push that would create for all time another misunderstood, problem child--discouraged, spirit crushed, convinced of his own failure?

The question of grading appeared to be a difficult one for teachers to answer. On the one hand there were the parents who thought in terms of grades (letters or numbers) as they were reported when they went to school, and, on the other, there were the more recent policies of grading advocated by the educational theorists. These schemes included informal letters to the parents, behavior and attitude reports that evaded the academic phase of education, the Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory system, and others. Between these two extremes were found the teachers and administrators who could not themselves get together on a common system of grading; and, therefore, there were the many different schemes as evidenced in this report.

Grouping was or was not used depending largely upon the size of the class. Adams et al have advocated that groups should be established as the children, on the basis of ability, were taken from the readiness group and placed into the pre-primer reading class. In practice, however, that was not the way it was done. In most cases the reading readiness period was terminated at one time, and pre-primer reading was started as one class, or in groups, depending on the number of children.

The promotion policies used in these fifteen survey-schools appeared to be in line with that generally used the country over, that is, non-promotion was common, in this case running over ten per cent of all of the children tested. Were latest theory followed, promotion would have been a standing order and, the writer feels, much childhood anguish would have been dispelled with little or no loss in fluency and understanding in reading.



## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Before summarizing this study, the author wishes to caution the reader to keep in mind that the findings and commentaries, the suggested conclusions and solutions, as they are stated in this and other chapters of this paper, apply, and were meant to apply, only to the fifteen schools visited.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain, analyze, and evaluate the practices of teaching reading in the fifteen schools in Western Montana that were included in this survey. It is almost axiomatic that the importance of reading in education as it is carried on in schools today cannot be overestimated. It was because of the importance of reading that this study was made in that field rather than some other field of education.

The mastery of reading by the pupil is the only secure foundation on which he can build his academic future. Tied in directly with reading mastery is the question of personality development. The success that the child meets with in reading achievement is often reflected in his emotional state and attitudes generally.

This study has been based upon visitations to the fifteen schools of this survey, personal interviews with the sixteen

teachers concerned (See Appendix A), and a testing program that was given to the first graders of these survey schools (See Appendixes B and C). In addition to the interviews and the testing program that was given out in the field, considerable library research was conducted to better ground the author in the accepted theory of first grade reading instruction.

After checking through this paper, eleven points stood out in the author's mind as being important enough to warrant special mention. These are:

First, the returns of the Reilley Primary Reading Test used in this survey indicated that these two hundred sixty-two Western Montana children showed up favorably when compared with the national norms established by the Reilley Test. These Western Montana children excelled in word recognition and word meaning. This testing program further revealed that forty-eight children (17 girls and 31 boys) were critically retarded, according to the standards set up in this study. These forty-eight children were the main concern of the writer throughout this study. Granting that the over-all reading achievement of the whole group was satisfactory, reading to these critically retarded children was a serious business when we think of them as children rather than as statistical units. The recommendation that the writer would make is that every administrator, teacher, and parent who has to deal with a critically retarded reading child should try to discover the cause of the trouble and find the solution which will assure satisfactory reading achievement for that child.

Second, reading authorities regard reading readiness as an essential condition to successful reading instruction. This apparently was recognized by most of these Western Montana schools in that fourteen out of the sixteen classrooms visited had such reading readiness periods. The writer recommends that this readiness period becomes a standard practice in all classrooms and that, under normal circumstances, it should be continued for approximately six weeks.

Third, students of elementary education regard the use of reading readiness tests as standard procedure to good reading instruction, and they generally hold six and one-half years as the desired age for the beginning teaching of reading. In practice, six years was the generally considered age for admission, but this entry requirement was extremely varied. In practice, many five year old children were admitted into the first grades. The first class district had the most consistent entry requirements while the third class districts, and especially the rural schools, were the most lax and disorganized in this respect. Authorities and teachers alike recognized mental immaturity as a leading cause for failure in reading achievement and non-promotion. On the basis of this survey, the writer would urge that parents be asked not to send their children until they were six years old and all children, ~~and~~, irrespective of age, be given a reading readiness test at the beginning of the first grade training. Children failing to score the required grade on this test should then be withheld until the next school year or until they reached the age of compulsory attendance in which case they would be admitted

irrespective of score in readiness. This practice, the author felt, would not impose any unfair discrimination against five year old children and would catch immaturity at all age levels.

Fourth, vocabulary development is regarded by some reading authorities as the most important aspect of reading. These fifteen schools, according to the Reilley Test, measured up favorably in sight vocabulary, and phonics was the principal means of word analysis used. Phonics today, according to authorities, must be highly personalized and functional. It must be made continuous and cumulative throughout the common school rather than be used as a booster reserved solely for the primary grades. Besides phonics, the writer would urge, with Betts, Adams et al, that other types of word analysis be developed: configuration, context clues, pictures, analysis of compound words, and syllabication. These suggested means of word recognition are meant for the whole primary period and not only for the first grade. Probably no one type of word analysis should be developed to the exclusion of the others. If reading is to become a useful tool to the child, it must provide immediate satisfaction, must appeal to his interest. Therefore, the importance of vocabulary and word analysis can be seen. If these mechanics overwhelm him, forthcoming satisfaction will not compensate enough to offset the effort; and the normal child will quickly put reading aside.

Fifth, the fifteen schools of this study were found weak in comprehension according to the Reilley Primary Reading Test. Most of these schools, in the view of the writer, devoted too

much of their first grade reading instruction to oral reading, probably to the point of impairing their silent reading program. While the survey holds forth no conclusive evidence to prove a direct relationship between this neglect of silent reading and limited comprehension, the writer suggests that such a relationship may exist. The writer believes that authorities would bear him out in recommending that oral and silent reading be developed side by side, as they were in most cases, but with a greater percentage of the total reading program being devoted to silent reading than was reported as being done. While nothing specific has been read as to the exact percentage of the reading instruction to be devoted to oral and silent reading, the writer believes that he would go along with the teachers in letting oral reading utilize the larger share of the reading program in the first grade.

Sixth, as should be the case according to authority, reading was developed side by side with the other language arts; speech, language, and writing. Different schools combined these in different ratios, but all schools presumably recognized that oral vocabulary must proceed reading achievement. The language arts should be taught simultaneously with reading because the mastery of one tends to bolster, complement, and enhance the learning of the others.

Seventh, the teachers reported that timidity, insecurity, and immaturity were the leading causes for emotional difficulty and that speech impediments, faulty vision, and poor hearing were the main physical handicaps to effective reading. Students

of elementary education would quickly recognize this as a common situation. The advocated solutions to these emotional deterrents to reading were gentleness, understanding, patience, and friendliness. The speech impediments were corrected through speech guidance and language instruction. It was recognized that these troubles may be linked to faulty hearing. A school nurse made visitations to most of these schools, glasses had been prescribed in several cases, but a number of these still remained unfilled.

Eighth, educational experts today generally recommend that grading be based on emotional and social considerations as much as academic. They generally recommend the use of informal letters, or a system of grading as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rather than the use of numbers or letters. In practice grading continued to be an unsolved problem. Practices differed as did suggested procedures. The method of Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory grading appeared to be the most popular, but the use of letters remained in common usage. It appears that all grading systems will continue to be confusing and unpopular as long as the objectives and goals remain undefined and understood differently by parents and teachers.

Ninth, whether the classes were or were not divided into groups largely depended upon their size. This should be done on the basis of ability, as it was where used. These groups, however, should be, according to cited authority, started as follows: first, draw into active reading instruction only the most advanced children out of the readiness period; later, the average children should be placed in a second group; and, finally, the less adept should be organized into a third group. In this way those

requiring additional background building can be retained in the readiness period, and the advanced can surge ahead in reading as best they are able.

Tenth, over ten per cent of the first graders of the fifteen survey schools were "pronounced guilty" of being unable to read and were "sentenced" to a probable retention in the first grade for an additional nine months. This percentage is not uncommon the nation over, and on the basis of that it was not an unusually serious matter. But the thirty-one children who were probably failed, apparently unaware of the statistical correctness of this situation, probably viewed the whole spectacle with doubts and anxiety. As the writer sees it, children do not learn to read either through promotion or non-promotion. Non-promotion merely adds a second problem to the first. It is believed that alterations in the reading instructional program (major or minor, as needed) would probably do more to supply the needs of these thirty-one "failures" than would compelling them to sit through a return engagement of what to them apparently had been ineffective reading instruction. Were there reason to believe that such retention would further the cause of reading, it might be justifiable. However, research appears not to bear this out. Students of education have proposed that the primary instructional period be regarded as one continuous unit and that promotion be made at the close of each school year. Thus, individual differences would be bridged by keeping the instruction continuous and passing the child at the close of each successive

year. This practice was nowhere in this study, and the writer urges that its application be considered.

Finally, the writer is of the opinion that the teacher, next to the children, is the most important factor in the school situation. If the children like her, if she can instill interest and a will to learn, if she has that "way with children," then she may be a good teacher even though some of her methods and practices are irregular. The ideal situation, however, is that such a "natural" should master the latest theory and procedures based on research of recognized educational authorities. Such a combination would offer the normal child the best possible opportunity for learning. The teacher should comprehend the best approach to reading instruction, the mechanics of learning, and the attitudes and emotions of the child. She must have mastered the art of instilling interest and a will to learn. It is generally agreed that systematized planning in reading instruction is superior to hit and miss, unplanned teaching.

The writer believes further that each of the sixteen teachers included in this study should read this paper, not to learn the right as against the wrong way of teaching, not to find a correction to a wrong practice, but to make comparisons between her own class procedures as against the others, and to learn different ways of doing things. This survey will be incomplete, the writer feels, until this has been done. To expedite this reading, postal cards inviting teachers and administrators to examine this paper have been sent to the eleven administrators of the fifteen schools of this study. This card, besides inviting them in for the reading, instructed them as



to the code number used to designate their school and teacher.

A copy of this postal card follows in Appendix D (page xxxviii).

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APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR  
THE PRACTICES OF TEACHING FIRST GRADE READING  
IN  
FIFTEEN SCHOOLS OF WESTERN MONTANA

Mr. L. J. Carleton, Adviser  
School of Education  
Montana State University

Page 1  
School Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ 1949

Myron Loe  
(Professional Paper)  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE  
for  
Practices of Teaching First Grade Reading  
in  
Fifteen Schools of Western Montana

Part A

General Information

I. The School

1. Name of School \_\_\_\_\_
2. School Address \_\_\_\_\_
3. School Classification \_\_\_\_\_
4. Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_
5. Principal \_\_\_\_\_
6. Total Number of Rooms in Elementary Grade School \_\_\_\_\_
7. Grades Taught in Primary Room \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of Pupils in First Grade \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Girls \_\_\_\_\_ Boys \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. The School Program (Schedule of Classes)
9. The School Program (Schedule of Classes)  
Please attach a copy of this program to this blank.
10. Number of Days in the 1948-49 School-Year \_\_\_\_\_

II. The Teacher

11. Name of Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
12. Teacher's Training:
  - a. Years Over High School \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. College \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Degree \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Certification \_\_\_\_\_
13. Special Training in Psychology, Reading:
- a. Child Psychology \_\_\_\_\_ Hours (Quarter or Semester)
- b. Psychology of Education (Learning) \_\_\_\_\_ Hours (Q or S)
- c. Reading Methods \_\_\_\_\_ Hours (Q or S)
14. Member:
- a. N. E. A. \_\_\_\_\_ b. M. E. A. c. Teacher's Union \_\_\_\_\_
15. Experience \_\_\_\_\_ Years

### III. The Pupils and Their Grades

16. This information is to be taken from Report Cards and Tests.

No.	Name	Report Card						Tests			XXXX
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
26.											
27.											
28.											
29.											
30.											
Test _____	Reading-Readiness	Test _____	Intelligence								
Test _____	Diagnostic	Test _____	Achievement								
Test _____	Other	Test XXXX	REILLEY								

Part BWhat The Teacher Thinks About It

Please answer each question as briefly as possible, base it on your own experience in the classroom, and report each experience as you actually find it rather than the way "it should be."

Use the stamped envelope for returning this questionnaire and your answers to Myron Loe, 100 Van Buren, Missoula, Montana

Please answer and mail this by \_\_\_\_\_, 1949.

1. In reading-readiness, how do you determine when the child is ready to read?
2. What do you do to help the child achieve reading comprehension?
3. Do you ever use grades to motivate the child in reading? If so, how?
4. What do you feel should be accomplished in the first grade reading (goals)?
5. How do you teach first grade phonics? How extensively is phonics used?
6. What are some emotional difficulties that your first grade readers have experienced? What have you done to correct them?
7. What evidence have you from your own teaching experience that justify the teaching of phonics in first grade reading? Do children use phonics functionally in word perception?
8. Considering the child's welfare (academically, emotionally, socially, personally), what does your experience suggest as the best promotion policy?
9. What in your opinion would be the model system of grading?
10. What practice--or practices--in your own experience have been especially successful in the teaching of first grade reading?

Reporting Teacher: Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_



Part C

The Personal Interview

I. Reading Readiness

1. What is the policy for admitting a child to the first grade?
  - a. Age \_\_\_\_\_ Years Remarks:
  - b. Age & Other Condition \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Reading Readiness Test \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did the pupils in your first grade have kindergarten?
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ b. No \_\_\_\_\_ (give numbers)
3. Was reading-readiness test given at the termination of the reading-readiness period? \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
  - a. Informal \_\_\_\_\_ b. Formal \_\_\_\_\_
4. If informal, what was its nature?
5. If formal, which one? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How is social and reading readiness developed?
  - a. Test \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Muscle & eye movement control \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks: (Place 1st 3)
  - c. Oral expression \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Visitations \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Picture study \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Vocabulary drill \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Dramatization \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long did the reading-readiness program take? \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks
8. Is your reading-readiness program handled on an--
  - a. Individual basis? \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
  - b. Group basis?

II. Teaching Methods Used

9. Methods used in teaching reading are: (Place 1st 3)
  - a. Identification of word forms \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
  - b. Letters & syllables \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Phonics \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Sentences & Phrases \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Story method \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Is any home work done?

- a. Encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ b. Assignments made \_\_\_\_\_  
 Permitted \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom made \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prohibited \_\_\_\_\_ Never made \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

11. Is the child permitted to "read ahead" in his reader?

- a. Encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Permitted \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Prohibited \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. No stand taken \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you use the Montana State Course of Study?

- a. In full \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. In part \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Not at all \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you use "study unites?" \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. The farm \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. The zoo \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. The home \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Pets \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Toys \_\_\_\_\_  
 f. The Circus \_\_\_\_\_  
 g. Birds \_\_\_\_\_  
 h. Friends \_\_\_\_\_  
 i. Manners \_\_\_\_\_  
 j. Others \_\_\_\_\_

14. In your reading program what is the 1, 2, 3 order of emphasis or importance of the following types of reading?

- a. Work type (Informative & skills) \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Pleasure type (Recreational) \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Remedial type (Corrective) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is your class handled as a single unit or in groups? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (give number)

16. If divided, division is based on:

- a. Ability \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Alphabet \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Other \_\_\_\_\_

17. In number 16, how is "ability" determined?

- a. Intelligence test \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Reading-readiness test \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Observations \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Other \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

18. What names are used for these groups?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_

19. Is the library used in the reading program? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Located in primary room \_\_\_\_\_  
     School library \_\_\_\_\_  
     Other \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Average number of library books read during the year  
 by each child?  
     5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 15 \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 25 \_\_\_\_\_ 30 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. The least number read by any one child? \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. The highest number read by any one child? \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Motivation

20. What aids are used to motivate the child? (Place 1st 3)

- a. Still pictures \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Background building \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Phonograph records \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Film-strips \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Radio \_\_\_\_\_  
 f. Dramatization \_\_\_\_\_  
 g. Story telling \_\_\_\_\_  
 h. Other \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Which subjects have the most appeal and interest:

- a. To girls: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. To boys: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

### IV. Oral Reading in the Reading Program

22. As between oral and silent reading, what per cent of your reading program is given over to:

- a. Oral reading? \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Silent reading? \_\_\_\_\_

23. In this \_\_\_\_\_ -week school term, how much time in reading is devoted to:

- a. Reading-readiness? \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks Remarks:  
 b. Pre-primer \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks  
 c. Primer \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks  
 d. Readers \_\_\_\_\_ Weeks

24. Is any choral reading done? \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks?

V. Silent Reading In The Reading Program

25. When is silent reading introduced into the first grade?

\_\_\_\_\_ Month Remarks:

26. How do you teach the non-use of lips in silent reading?

- a. Let child use lips first and later discourage it? \_\_\_\_\_  
Demand non-use of lips from the first? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Imitate father and mother \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Call attention to use (or non-use) of lips \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Hold paper between lips \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Play game: listening and watching to see who uses lips \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

27. How do you check to be sure that the child is reading?

- a. Oral questions \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Discussion \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Written exercise \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Have child read passage with answer to question \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_

28. If it is found that the child merely goes through the motions of silent reading: skims over, reads little, retains nothing, you:

- a. Reprimand child and continue silent reading program \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Continue silent reading program with easier material \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Abandon silent reading for the moment for a total oral reading program \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Appeal to their pride \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Reread until question can be answered \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

29. Silent reading and oral reading are taught:

- a. Alternately in same class period \_\_\_\_\_
- b. In separate classes \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Either, whichever is convenient for the class \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Oral in class; silent with seatwork \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

VI. The Reading Program in the Curriculum

30. Each child has how many reading classes each day? \_\_\_\_\_

31. How long are these periods:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

32. Are content subject readers used?

- a. Science or nature study \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Numbers \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Health \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

33. What emphasis are given the other language arts:

			Formal Drill	
	<u>None</u>	<u>Incidental</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Much</u>
a. Speaking	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Listening	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Writing	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. Spelling	_____	_____	_____	_____

34. What kind of writing is taught?

	<u>None</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Seat-</u> <u>work</u>	<u>Black-</u> <u>board</u>	<u>Other</u>
a. Manuscript	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. Cursive	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

35. Nursery rhymes are:

- a. Read \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Memorized \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Dramatized \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Sung \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### VII. Phonics

36. When is phonics brought into the reading program?

37. What text is used as basis for system used?

38. Is the child taught the concept of vowels and consonants?

39. To what degree is the alphabet used?

- a. Memorize it \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. Say it \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Sing it \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Write the letters \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Learn to recognize \_\_\_\_\_  
 f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### VIII. Reading Defects & Difficulties

40. Which do you find most common? (Place 1st 3)

- a. Faulty eye sight \_\_\_\_\_

- b. Faulty hearing \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Speech impediment \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Subnormal mentally \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

41. What health service is provided?

	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Semi-annually</u>	<u>Annually</u>
a. School nurse	_____	_____	_____
b. School doctor	_____	_____	_____
c. Medical care on recommendation of teacher	_____	_____	_____
d. Other	_____	_____	_____

42. How many of the first grade children:

- a. Need glasses? \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Have glasses? \_\_\_\_\_

### IX. Provisions for Individual, Diagnostic, & Remedial Work

43. Has an intelligent test been given? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_

44. Has a diagnostic test been given? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. When? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. To Whom? All or selected pupils

45. Are there provisions for individual-remedial work?

- a. Remedial teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Opportunity room \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Child study center \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Reading clinic \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Private tutor \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

46. Homework and parent-help is:

- a. Encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Encouraged only for remedial work \_\_\_\_\_
- c. No stand taken \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Discouraged \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Prohibited \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

47. The basic text:

- a. May be taken home anytime \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

- b. May be taken home only after completion \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. May or may not be taken home as the child wills \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. May never be taken home \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

X. Materials & Supplies Used

48. Flash Cards \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

a. Kinds \_\_\_\_\_

49. Reading Charts \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

a. Number \_\_\_\_\_

50. Number of books read \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Pre-primers \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Primers \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Readers \_\_\_\_\_

51. Texts read a. Basic (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
                   b. Others (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               (3) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               (4) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               (5) \_\_\_\_\_  
                               (6) \_\_\_\_\_

52. Are library books used in regular class work? \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

53. Workbooks a. Numbers \_\_\_\_\_ c. Phonics \_\_\_\_\_  
               (# ) b. Reading \_\_\_\_\_ d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

54. Progress Chart \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

55. a. A Weekly Reader \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
      b. Picture Dictionary \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

56. Black Board \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:

- a. Very much \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Average \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Very Little \_\_\_\_\_

57. What is your attitude toward Funny (Comic) Books in school?

- a. Encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:  
 b. No stand taken \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Discouraged \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Banned \_\_\_\_\_

58. Reading to the pupils is the type of opening exercise used:

- a. 25% of the time \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. 50% of the time \_\_\_\_\_
- c. 75% of the time \_\_\_\_\_
- d. 100% of the time \_\_\_\_\_

59. a. Does the primary room have access to a moving picture projector? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b. How many pictures are shown per month on the average?

### XI. Evaluation of Reading Achievement

60. Has an achievement test been given? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. When? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Results? (Median) \_\_\_\_\_

61. According to your belief as to what you think should be achieved in first grade reading (see question 4, Part B), how would you rate the pupils in your class:

- a. Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- Unsatisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Above average \_\_\_\_\_
- Average \_\_\_\_\_
- Below average \_\_\_\_\_

### XII. Grade Reporting & Promotion Policy

62. Are Cumulative Records kept? \_\_\_\_\_

63. What is the length of the school period reported?

- a. 1 month \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 weeks \_\_\_\_\_
- Quarterly \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How many periods are there in the school year? \_\_\_\_\_

64. What is the system of reporting grades used?

- a. A, B, C, D, \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Informal Letter Report \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

65. The promotion policy is based on:

- a. One year period \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
- b. Semester \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Quarter \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other \_\_\_\_\_



66. In this first grade class, how many are "repeats?" \_\_\_\_\_
67. This experience of repeating has been:
- a. Helpful to the children \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
  - b. Not enough evidence to comment \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Detrimental to the Children \_\_\_\_\_
68. In the present class, it is probable that:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ will be promoted to the second grade.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ will be retained in the first grade.
69. The causes for non-promotion are: (Place 1st 3)
- a. Illness \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks:
  - b. Absenteeism due to causes other than illness \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Problem child \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Immaturity \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Inability \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
70. In case of non-promotion, the final decision is made by:
- a. Teacher \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Teacher and principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Teacher, principal, parents \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_

End

APPENDIX B

THE READING TEST  
USED IN  
THE PRACTICES OF TEACHING FIRST GRADE READING  
IN  
FIFTEEN SCHOOLS OF WESTERN MONTANA

PRIMARY READING TEST  
GRADE ONE--FORM B  
ALBERT G. REILLEY

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

APPENDIX C

THE PUPILS, THEIR REPORT CARD GRADES AND TEST SCORES  
FOR  
THE PRACTICES OF TEACHING FIRST GRADE READING  
IN  
FIFTEEN SCHOOLS OF WESTERN MONTANA.

/

## APPENDIX C

## THE KEY FOR TABLES I-XI INCLUSIVE

Note: This is a compilation of the report card grades and the test scores of the 262 children of the fifteen schools included in this survey. Instead of using the child's name a code number was used. The F in this number indicates that the child was a girl, and the M in a code number means that that child was a boy. Within each school, the children are arranged by sex and according to the numerical order of their grade equivalents received in the Reilley Primary Reading Test. The date given at the head of each table indicates the time that the Reilley Primary Reading Test was given at that particular school.

The Key

1. Total Raw Score, Reilley Primary Reading Test.
2. Grade Equivalent, Reilley Primary Reading Test.
3. Metropolitan Achievement Test, World Book Co., Chicago.
4. Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test, World Book Co., Chicago.
5. Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test, California Test Bureau, Los Angeles.
6. Unit Scales of Attainment Achievement Test, Educational Test Bureau, Minneapolis.
7. Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, World Book Co., Chicago.
8. Coordinated Scales of Attainment, Educational Test Bureau, Minneapolis.

TABLE I

SCHOOL 1A

April 25, 1949

Name	Age	Report Card Grades*	School Testing Program3	Tests						
				Reilley Primary Reading Test				Total Grade		Equiv. 2
				Parts:				Raw 1	1	
				I	II	III	IV			
F1	6	A/S A/S A/S	3.5	20	19	10	6	55		2.9
F2	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.6	20	18	10	6	54		2.8
F3	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.0	20	18	9	5	52		2.7
F4	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.5	19	17	8	8	52		2.7
F5	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.4	20	15	10	5	50		2.6
F6	7	A/S B/S B/S	2.2	19	17	10	3	49		2.5
F7	7	B/S B/S C/S	2.3	20	17	9	3	49		2.5
F8	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.2	18	16	7	5	46		2.3
F9	6			18	13	9	4	44		2.1
F10	7	A/S B/S C/U	2.1	18	14	8	3	43		2.1
F11	7	— — —	1.6	12	9	6	5	32		1.5
M12	6	— — — A/S	2.8	19	18	10	9	56		2.9
M13		B/S B/S B/S	2.3	20	19	10	5	54		2.8
M14	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.6	20	19	10	3	52		2.7
M15	6	B/S C/U B/S	2.2	19	18	8	4	49		2.5
M16	6	B/S B/S B/S	2.3	18	15	10	5	48		2.4
M17	6	B/S B/S C/S	2.2	20	15	10	0	45		2.2
M18	7	B/S C/U C/S	2.1	20	16	7	2	45		2.2
M19	6	B/S C/S C/S	2.1	20	14	7	3	44		2.1
M20	7	B/S C/S C/S	2.2	16	16	8	4	44		2.1
M21	6	B/S C/S C/S	2.1	17	12	5	3	37		1.7
M22	6	B/S C/S C/S	2.1	18	12	4	2	36		1.6
M23	6	B/S C/S C/S	1.9	14	13	8	1	36		1.6
M24	6		1.5	14	11	4	0	29		1.3
M25	6	— D/U D/U	1.7	13	10	3	3	29		1.3
M26	—	B/S C/S C/S	1.9	4	14	6	1	25		1.2

Key to report card grades: A Excellent S Satisfactory  
 B Above average Achievement  
 C Average  
 D Below average U Unsatisfactory  
 E Failing Achievement

\*There were four periods reported in the school year: 10, 9, 9,  
 and 10 weeks respectively.

TABLE II

SCHOOL 1B

April 26, 1949

Tests											
Name	Age	Report Card Grades*			School Testing Program 3	Reilley Primary				Reading Test	
						Parts:				Total Raw 1	Grade Equiv.2
						I	II	III	IV		
F27	6	B/U	A/S	A/S	3.7	20	20	10	10	60	3.0
F28	6	B/S	B/S	B/S	3.1	19	20	10	8	57	2.0
F29	6	A/S	A/S	A/S	3.6	20	19	10	10	59	3.0
F30	6	B/S	B/S	A/S	2.8	20	20	9	9	58	3.0
F31	6	C/U	B/S	A/S	3.5	19	19	10	8	56	2.9
F32	6	B/S	B/S	A/S	3.2	20	18	10	8	56	2.9
F33	6	C/U	C/S	C/S	3.2	20	19	10	5	54	2.8
F34	5	B/S	A/S	B/S	2.8	20	17	9	8	54	2.8
F35	6	A/S	A/S	A/S	3.3	19	16	10	7	52	2.7
F36	6	B/U	B/S	B/S	3.3	19	17	10	5	51	2.7
F37	5	C/S	C/S	C/S	2.3	17	16	7	4	44	2.1
F38	6	C/U	C/S	D/U	2.4	19	13	8	4	44	2.1
M39	6	B/S	B/S	A/S	3.5	20	20	10	9	59	3.0
M40	5	C/S	C/S	C/S	2.7	19	16	10	8	53	2.8
M41	6	C/U	B/S	B/S	3.0	19	18	10	6	53	2.8
M42	6	C/U	C/S	C/S	2.9	14	19	10	8	51	2.7
M43	6	C/U	C/S	B/S	2.9	20	17	10	4	51	2.7
M44	6	B/S	B/S	B/S	2.7	16	17	9	9	51	2.7
M45	6	C/U	B/S	B/S	2.7	18	17	8	6	50	2.6
M46	6	C/U	C/S	C/S	2.9	17	19	7	6	49	2.5
M47	5	C/U	C/S	B/S	2.7	16	18	9	5	48	2.4
M48	7			C/S	2.4	19	17	7	3	46	2.3
M49	6	C/U	C/S	C/S	2.6	19	15	9	3	46	2.3
M50	5	C/U	C/S	B/S	3.0	16	16	10	3	45	2.2
M51	6	C/S	C/S	C/S	2.4	17	12	8	5	42	2.0
M52	5	C/U	C/S	C/S	2.5	13	15	8	5	41	1.9
M53	7	C/U	D/U	E/U	1.6	15	13	5	4	37	1.7

Key to report card grades: A Excellent S Satisfactory  
 B Above Average Achievement  
 C Average  
 D Below Average U Unsatisfactory  
 E Failing Achievement

\*There were four periods reported in the school year: 10, 9, 9,  
 and 10 weeks respectively.

TABLE III

SCHOOL 10

May 2, 1949

Name	Age	Report Card Grades*			School Testing Program 3	Tests					
						Reilley Primary Reading Test				Total Raw 1	Grade Equiv.2
						Parts:					
I	II	III	IV								
F54	6	A	A	A	2.8	20	18	10	8	56	2.9
F55	6	B	A	A	2.4	19	19	9	6	53	2.8
F56	6	C	B	B	2.2	20	18	9	3	50	2.6
F57	6	A	A	A	2.4	19	17	8	6	50	2.6
F58	6	B	B	B	2.5	18	18	10	4	50	2.6
F59	5	A	A	B/U	2.26	19	15	9	6	49	2.5
F60	6	B	B	B	2.0	17	15	10	4	46	2.3
F61	6	C	C	C	1.8	16	14	9	6	45	2.2
F62	6	C	C	C	1.8	15	14	7	7	43	2.1
F63	6	C	C	C/U	1.8	18	14	6	4	42	2.0
F64	6	C	C	C	2.0	14	16	4	7	41	1.9
F65	6	C	B	C	1.76	16	13	7	5	41	1.9
F66	7	C	A	A	2.1	8	17	9	5	39	1.8
F67	6	C	D	D/U	1.4	12	11	7	4	34	1.5
F68	6	E	D	C	1.7	14	12	5	3	34	1.5
F69	5	C	C	C	1.8	14	10	4	3	31	1.4
F70	6	B	B	A	2.3	20	16	9	5	50	2.6
M71	6	C	C	C	2.2	17	14	10	8	49	2.5
M72	6	D	B	B	2.25	20	16	10	3	49	2.5
M73	6	A	B	B	2.6	18	15	10	5	48	2.4
M74	7	A	C	C	2.1	15	17	9	4	45	2.2
M75	6	B	B	C	2.1	19	14	7	5	45	2.2
M76	6	C	C	C	2.0	18	16	7	3	44	2.1
M77	6	D	E	E/U	1.5	8	6	5	1	20	1.2
M78	6	D	D	E/U	1.6	9	7	2	3	21	1.2
M79	6	D	E	F/U	1.0	5	4	1	1	11	1.1

Key to report card grades: A Excellent U Unsatisfactory  
 B Above Average Achievement  
 C Average  
 D Below Average  
 E Failing

\*There were four periods reported in the school year: 10, 9, 9, and 10 weeks respectively.

TABLE IV.

SCHOOL 2A

April 29, 1949

										Tests									
										Reilley Primary Reading Test									
										School Testing Program				Parts:		Total		Grade	
Name	Age	Report Card Grades*				4		3		I	II	III	IV	Raw 1	Equiv.2				
F80	6	B-	B	A-	A+	B+	99	2.5	20	17	10	7	54	2.8					
F81	6	A	C	C	C	B	113	2.5	20	17	10	5	52	2.7					
F82	6	C	C	C+	C	C+	112	2.3	20	17	9	6	52	2.7					
F83	5	C	C+	C-	C+	C+	104	2.2	17	14	9	4	44	2.1					
F84	6	B+	C	F	C-	D-	103	2.3	17	14	7	3	41	1.9					
M85	6	C+	A	B	C+	C	107	3.0	20	19	9	5	53	2.8					
M86	6	D	F	C	C	C	114	2.6	19	16	10	8	53	2.8					
M87	6	C	C	B-	B	A-	105	2.6	19	18	9	6	52	2.7					
M88	5	B	B+	B+	B	B	111	2.8	20	17	10	5	52	2.7					
M89	6	D	C	C	D	D	92	2.0	20	17	8	5	50	2.6					
M90	5	B	A-	C-	C+	C	113	2.5	20	18	10	2	50	2.6					
M91	5	C	C	C+	C+	C+	104	2.4	18	17	9	4	48	2.4					
M92	7	B-	B	C+	D	D-	84	2.4	20	15	5	1	41	1.9					
M93	6	C-	B	B-	C+	C	114	2.3	17	13	7	2	39	1.8					
M94	6	F	D	F	D-	D-	91	1.8	11	14	6	6	37	1.7					
M95	6	D-	F	F	F	F	90	1.6	14	13	7	1	35	1.6					
M96**7									8	10	5	2	25	1.2					

\* There were six six-week periods in the school year.

\*\* This boy was recently arrived from Alaska and was enrolled in school within the past two weeks. He had been tutored by his mother by means of a U. S. Government correspondence course. Teacher 2A estimated his work the equivalent of three months formal school training. After two, three months here, his people plan to return to Alaska.



TABLE V

SCHOOL 2B-a

May 20, 1949

Name	Age	Report Card Grades*					Tests							
							School Testing Program		Reilly Primary Reading Test				Total Raw 1	Grade Equiv.2
							5	6	Parts:		III	IV		
									I	II				
F97	6	C	B	A	A	A	1.5	5.5	20	20	10	7	57	3.0
F98	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.1	4.0	20	19	10	7	56	2.9
F99	6	C	B	A	A	A	.9	4.9	20	19	9	5	53	2.8
F100	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.3	4.5	20	19	8	7	54	2.8
F101	7	C	C	A	B	A	1.9	3.3	19	17	10	7	53	2.8
F102	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.9	3.6	20	19	8	7	54	2.8
F103	7	C	C	B	A	A	1.9	4.3	19	19	8	7	53	2.8
F104	7			A	A	A			19	18	9	5	51	2.7
F105	7	C	B	C	C	C	1.1	3.0	18	18	9	6	51	2.7
F106	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.0		18	17	10	7	52	2.7
F107	7	C	B	B	B	C	1.7	3.1	20	18	10	4	52	2.7
F108	8	D	D	B	C	C			15	18	10	7	50	2.6
F109	7	C	B	B	B	C	1.2	2.0	18	16	10	6	50	2.6
F110	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.4	3.6	20	15	9	5	49	2.5
F111	7	C	B	A	A	A	1.9	4.1	18	16	8	5	47	2.4
F112	7	C	B	B	B	C	1.2	3.0	18	13	6	2	39	1.8
F113	7	C	B	A	A	C	1.8	2.4	9	13	9	3	34	1.5
M114	8	C	C	B	B	A	1.5	3.7	20	18	10	7	55	2.9
M115	8	C	B	A	A	A	1.1	3.5	20	17	9	7	53	2.8
M116	7	C	B	B	B	B	1.0		20	18	10	5	53	2.8
M117	7	C	B	A	A	A			20	19	9	6	54	2.8
M118	7	C	C	B	B	A	1.1	3.0	19	15	10	4	48	2.4
M119	6	C	B	B	B	A	1.4	3.7	18	16	7	4	45	2.2
M120	7	C	C	B	B	C			18	17	8	2	45	2.2
M121	6	C	C	B	B	C	1.1	3.0	17	16	8	1	42	2.0
M122	7	D	C	C	C	C	1.0	1.8	19	13	7	2	41	1.9
M123	6	D	C	C	B	B			9	8	4	1	22	1.2

\* There were six six-week periods in the school year.

TABLE VI

SCHOOL 2B-b

May 20, 1949

Reilley Primary Reading Test															
Tests															
School Testing Program															
Parts:															
Total Grade															
Name	Age	Report Card					Program		Parts:				Raw 1		Equiv.2
		Grades*					5	6	I	II	III	IV			
F124	6	B	A	A	A	A	1.9	3.0	20	20	10	7	57		3.0
F125	6				A	A			19	12	9	8	51		2.7
F126	6	C	A	A	A	A	.9	3.0	20	15	9	5	49		2.5
F127	6			B	B	B			17	15	9	6	47		2.4
F128	6	D	A	B	C	B	.8	2.0	16	17	8	7	48		2.4
F129	6	B	A	B	B	B	.7	1.8	16	19	9	3	47		2.4
F130	6	D	B	C	C	B	.8	2.6	19	13	8	5	45		2.2
F131	6	F	C	C	C	C	.7	1.3	14	12	8	4	38		1.7
F132	6	D	A	A	C	C	.5	3.1	16	10	5	4	35		1.6
F133	6	C	D	D	D	D	.0	1.6	11	10	7	4	32		1.5
F134	6	D	C	D	D	D	.6	.0	10	7	5	3	25		1.2
F135	6	D	B	C	D	D	1.0	.0	6	6	5	4	21		1.2
F136	6	D	D	D	F		.5	.0	4	9	2	4	19		1.1
M137	6	B	A	A	A	A	.9	2.9	19	17	9	7	52		2.7
M138	6	B	A	B	B	C			17	17	7	3	44		2.1
M139	6	C	B	C	C	D	.8	1.0	17	11	8	3	39		1.8
M140	6	D	B	C	B	C	.2	1.8	17	10	9	2	38		1.7
M141	6	C	C	B	B	B	1.0	1.6	17	10	7	2	36		1.6
M142	6	D	C	C	D	C	.9	1.6	12	13	7	4	36		1.6
M143	6	C	B	B	C	C	.5	.0	10	9	6	5	30		1.4
M144	6								11	10	6	2	29		1.3
M145	6	F	C	F	F	D	.7	.0	10	12	3	2	27		1.3
M146	6	F	D	D	D	D	.6	.0	7	7	2	4	20		1.2
M147	6	F	F	F	F		.1		4	9	3	5	21		1.2
M148	6	C	D	D	D	D	.4	.0	8	10	4	0	22		1.2
M149	6								6	7	2	3	18		1.1

\* There were six six-week periods in the school year.

TABLE VII

SCHOOL 20

May 6, 1949

Name	Age	Report Card Grades*						School Testing Program 7 3	Tests						
									Reilley Primary Reading Test						
									Parts:				Total	Grade	
									I	II	III	IV	Raw 1	Equiv.2	
F150	6	S	S	S	S	S		1.18 3.9	20	19	10	9	58	3.0	
F151	6	S	S	S	S	S		.74 2.5	20	19	9	8	56	2.9	
F152	6	S	S	S	S	S		.89 2.6	20	18	9	6	53	2.8	
F153	5	S	S	S	S	S		2.2	20	15	10	8	53	2.8	
F154	6	S	S	S	S	S		.81 2.8	19	17	10	5	51	2.7	
F155	6	S	S	S	S	I		.99 2.7	20	16	10	6	52	2.7	
F156	6	S	S	S	S	S		.93 2.6	20	16	10	6	52	2.7	
F157	5	S	S	S	S	S		.59 2.4	18	15	9	7	49	2.5	
F158	6	S	S	S	S	S		.98 2.6	17	16	9	4	46	2.3	
F159	6	U	I	S	S	S		.61 1.9	16	15	9	3	43	2.1	
F160	6	S	S	S	S	S		.71 2.4	19	12	8	2	41	1.9	
F161	6	S	S	U	I	S		.76 2.5	16	12	10	3	41	1.9	
F162	6	S	U	S	S	S		.74 2.1	18	14	8	1	41	1.9	
F163	5	S	S	S	S	S		.48 2.4	18	17	8	4	37	1.7	
F164	6	S	S	S	S	S		2.8	17	6	7	3	33	1.5	
F165	6	S	S	U	I	S		.86 1.3	11	15	6	2	34	1.5	
F166	6	S	S	S	S	S		.49 2.0	9	10	7	4	30	1.4	
M167	6	S	S	S	S	S		.97 3.2	19	19	9	6	53	2.8	
M168	8				I			2.4	19	18	9	7	53	2.8	
M169	6	S	S	S	S	S		.89 2.9	19	16	9	6	50	2.6	
M170	7	S	S	S	S	S		2.5	17	13	9	8	47	2.4	
M171	6							2.6	17	19	9	3	48	2.4	
M172	6	S	S	S	S	S		.77 2.7	18	16	8	6	48	2.4	
M173	7	S	S	S	S	S		.97 2.8	19	17	7	3	46	2.3	
M174	7	S	S	S	S	S		2.4	18	15	8	5	46	2.3	
M175	6	S	S	S	S	S		.67 2.3	14	16	9	6	45	2.2	
M176	6	S	S	S	S	S		.70 2.3	19	15	10	1	45	2.2	
M177	5	U	S	U	I	S		.50 1.9	16	14	7	5	42	2.0	
M178	6	U	S	S	S	S		.77 2.5	17	12	7	6	42	2.0	
M179	6	S	S	S	S	S		.54 2.2	16	12	9	4	41	1.9	
M180	5	S	S	S	S	S		.53 2.0	19	12	8	2	41	1.9	
M181	6	S	S	S	S	S		2.8	13	15	8	3	39	1.8	
M182	7	S	S	S	S	S		.77 2.5	17	13	6	2	38	1.7	
M183	5	U	I	I	S	S		.36 2.3	16	13	6	2	37	1.7	
M184	6			S	S			2.1	17	10	6	4	37	1.7	
M185	6	S	S	S	S	S		.72 2.0	16	14	7	1	38	1.7	
M186	6	S	S	S	S	S		.77 1.8	18	11	6	1	36	1.6	
M187	5	S	U	U	U	U		.55 2.1	12	12	6	3	33	1.5	
M188	6	S	S	S	S	S		.49 1.9	14	10	6	4	34	1.5	
M189	5	S	S	S	U	I		.59 1.9	13	9	7	1	30	1.4	
M190	6	S	S	U	U	S		.75 1.6	9	14	5	3	31	1.4	
M191	6	S	S	U	U	U		.75 2.4	13	6	5	3	27	1.3	
M192	7	U	U	U	U	U		.52 1.6	4	9	3	3	19	1.2	
M193	6	S	U	U	U	U		.55 1.5	6	10	3	3	22	1.2	
M194	6	U	I	S	-	-		.41 1.0	6	5	3	2	16	1.1	

\* Six six-week periods; S, Satisfactory; U, Unsatisfactory; I, Improvement.

TABLE VIII

SCHOOL 3A

May 16, 1949

Name	Age	School					Tests						Total Grade																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
		Report Card	Grades*	Testing Program	3	Reilley Primary Reading Test				Raw	1																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
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\* Six six-week periods reported in school year.

\*\* This boy is sub-normal. He attends school merely for whatever he can gain socially and because his mother works

TABLE IX

SCHOOLS 3B &amp; 3C

Spring 1949

Tests										
		School		Reilley Primary Reading Test						
		Report Card	Testing	Parts:				Total	Grade	
Name	Age	Grades*	Program	8	I	II	III	IV	Raw 1	Equiv.2

## SCHOOL 3B

April 28, 1949

F218	6	C	D+	C-	D	F	6	9	5	2	22	1.2
F219	6	C	B	-	-	B	8	13	6	3	30	1.4
F220	6		A-	B+	B	A	18	16	8	6	48	2.4
M221	6	D+	C	C+	C+	C-	14	11	9	2	36	1.6
M222	6	D+	C-	C+	B-	C+	11	11	7	2	31	1.4
M223	6	C+	B		A	B	13	15	9	6	43	2.1
M224	5	C+	B-	B+	A	B+	13	13	9	2	37	1.7
M225	6	C+	B+	A	A	A	13	11	8	4	36	1.6
M226	6	F	D-	D-	D-	F	6	11	8	3	28	1.3

## SCHOOL 3C\*\*

May 3, 1949

F227	7	S	S+	S+	S+	VS	1.9	19	17	10	5	51	2.7
F228	6	S	S+	S+	VS	VS	1.6	15	15	8	5	43	2.1
F229	5	S	S	S	S	S	1.8	16	15	9	2	42	2.0
F230	7	S	S+	S	S+	S	1.6	16	13	9	4	42	2.0
F231	5	S	S	S	S	S	1.5	12	12	6	3	33	1.5
F232	6	S	S	S	S	S	1.3	13	12	5	2	32	1.5
F233	6	S	S	S	S	S	1.5	12	12	4	2	30	1.4
M234	6	S	S+	VS	S+	VS	2.3	18	17	9	3	47	2.4
M235	7	S	S+	S	S	S	1.7	19	15	6	5	45	2.2
M236	6	-	-	-	-	S+	2.4	18	15	9	2	44	2.1
M237	5						2.2	19	13	6	2	40	1.8
M238	7	S	S	S	S	S	1.9	15	12	3	0	30	1.4
M239	6	S	S-	U+	S-	U+	1.1	4	10	3	2	19	1.2
M240	6	S	S-	U+	U	U+	1.3	5	7	4	3	19	1.2

\* Six six-week periods reported in school year.

\*\* Six six-week periods. S, Satisfactory; U, Unsatisfactory; VS, Very Satisfactory, +, Improving; -, Weakening.

TABLE X

SCHOOLS 3vA &amp; 3vB

Spring, 1949

							Tests					
							Reilley Primary Reading Test					
		Report Card		School Testing		Program	Parts:				Total	Grade
Name	Age	Grades*	7	8			I	II	III	IV	Raw 1	Equiv.2
SCHOOL 3vA												
May 10, 1949												
F241	6	A-	A	A-	A	A	20	19	9	7	55	2.9
F242	6	B+	B+	A-	A-	A	18	16	8	4	46	2.3
M243	6	A-	A-	A-	A-	B-	20	13	8	1	42	2.0
M244	6	B-	A-	A-	B-	B+	15	16	9	1	41	1.9
M245	5	B	A-	B+	B+	C	13	10	6	1	30	1.4

## SCHOOL 3vB

May 12, 1949

F246	6	S	S	S	S+	VS**	2.2		20	16	8	5	49	2.5
F247	5	S	S	S	S	VS**	2.0		19	17	9	1	46	2.3
F248	6	S	S	S	S	VS**	1.6		18	14	6	7	45	2.2
M249	6	S	S	S	S+	VS**	2.0		18	14	10	6	48	2.4

\* Six six-week periods reported in the school year.

\*\* Above Average, child's rating in Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test. Scores not available. Therefore, teacher rated children in 3vB by memory.

\*\*\*Average, child's rating in Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test. Scores not available. Therefore, teacher rated children in 3vB by memory.

TABLE XI

SCHOOLS 3rA, 3rB, 3rC, &amp; 3rD

Spring, 1949

		Report Card		School Testing Program		Tests							
		Grades*						Reilley Primary Reading Test					
Name	Age					7 8		Parts: I II III IV				Total Raw 1	Grade Equiv.2
SCHOOL 3rA 8													
May 9, 1949													
F250	6	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	2.8	19	17	10	6	52	2.7
F251	6	Good**						18	13	10	6	47	2.4
M252	6	S	S	S	S	S	2.4	18	14	9	4	45	2.2
M253	6	S	S	VS	VS	VS	2.3	17	14	7	4	42	2.0
SCHOOL 3rB 8													
May 11, 1949													
F254***	5	S	S	S	S	S	1.7	20	19	10	6	55	2.9
M255****6		S	S	S	S-	S	1.7	20	17	7	2	46	2.3
SCHOOL 3rC 8													
May 12, 1949													
F256	5	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	1.09 2.8	19	16	9	6	50	2.6
M257	5	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	1.01 2.15	18	16	8	8	50	2.6
M258	6	VS	VS	VS	VS	VS	1.07 2.2	16	15	8	4	43	2.1
SCHOOL 3rD													
May 4, 1949													
F259	5	S	S	S	S	S	3.83	20	19	10	8	57	3.0
F260	6	S	S	S	S	S	2.63	18	17	5	2	42	2.0
F261	5	S	S	S	S	S	2.23	14	11	10	1	36	1.6
M262	6	S	S	S	S	S	1.9	6	10	4	4	24	1.2

\* Six six-week periods reported in school year.

\*\* This child in attendance for only eight weeks. Teacher 3rA ranked her "S"

\*\*\* Teacher 3rC noted improvement in this child in the past six weeks. This child has only recently made noted progress.

\*\*\*\* This child, too, Teacher 3rC reported, has made great progress in the last six weeks. Earlier in the year, he was seriously retarded because of illness and the absenteeism that followed.

APPENDIX D

THE POSTAL CARD INVITATION  
SENT TO THE ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS  
OF THE FIFTEEN SCHOOLS OF THIS STUDY  
INVITING THEM TO READ THIS SURVEY REPORT

---

School of Education  
Montana State University  
Missoula, Montana  
August 5, 1949

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

You and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, the first grade teacher in your school, are cordially invited to read "The Practices of Teaching First Grade Reading in Fifteen Schools of Western Montana," a professional paper by Myron Loe, reporting the interview held and the testing program conducted at your school last spring.

Copies of this paper are on file at the Education Office and the University Library. Code Number \_\_\_\_\_ designates your school and your teacher.

Respectfully yours,  
Myron Loe

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## INDEX

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The CODE-KEY for

THE PRACTICES OF TEACHING FIRST GRADE READING  
IN FIFTEEN SCHOOLS OF WESTERN MONTANA

A Professional Paper  
by  
Myron J. Loe

School of Education  
Montana State University  
Missoula, Montana

Spring and Summer Quarters, 1949

NO	CODE	SCHOOL	SCHOOL ADDRESS
1	1A	Central-Missoula	Missoula, Montana  Mrs. Almina Wallace, Teacher Mr. C. S. Porter, Superintendent Mr. S. J. Knudsen, Principal  April 25, 1949, Visitation
2	1B	Paxson-Missoula	Missoula, Montana  Mrs. Virginia B. Cox, Teacher Mr. C. S. Porter, Superintendent Mr. Geo. Blakeslee, Principal  April 26, 1949, Visitation
3	1C	Prescott-Missoula	Missoula, Montana  Miss G. I. Alstad, Teacher Mr. C. S. Porter, Superintendent Mr. S. J. Knudsen, Principal  May 2, 1949

4 2A Bonner

Bonner, Montana

Miss Anna M. Wertz, Teacher  
Mr. F. E. Lightfoot, Superintendent

April 29, 1949

5 2B-a St. Ignatius

St. Ignatius, Montana

Miss Ruth Corum, Teacher  
Mr. James M. Tindall, Superintendent  
Mr. Richard Mast, Principal

May 20, 1949

5 2B-b St. Ignatius

St. Ignatius, Montana

Miss Mae Green, Teacher

6 20 Stevensville

Stevensville, Montana

Mrs. Joyce L. Redding, Teacher  
Mr. H. M. Tamplin, Superintendent  
Mr. George Moore, Principal

May 6, 1949

7 3A Arlee

Arlee, Montana

Mrs. R. P. Ekern, Teacher  
Mr. Con Wittwer, Superintendent

May 16, 1949

8 3B Florence-Carleton

Florence, Montana

Miss Ella Maasjo, Teacher  
Mr. W. C. Robbins, Superintendent

April 28, 1949

9 30 Frenchtown

Frenchtown, Montana

Mrs. Dorothy H. Hunton, Teacher  
Mr. B. F. Baldwin, Superintendent

May 3, 1949



10. 3vA Hall

Hall, Montana

Mrs. Doris W. Eudaily, Teacher  
Mrs. W. K. Poese, Co. Supt. of Schools  
Granite County, Phillipsburg, Montana

May 10, 1949

11 3vB Saltese

Saltese, Montana

Mrs. Alice Coleman, Teacher  
Miss Sophie Loberg, Co. Supt. of Schools,  
Mineral Co., Superior, Montana

May 12, 1949

12 3rA Cold Springs

Missoula, Montana

Mrs. Ellen Finlayson, Teacher  
Mrs. W. H. Moore, Co. Supt. of Schools,  
Missoula County, Missoula, Montana

May 9, 1949

13 3rb Grass Valley

Missoula, Montana

Mrs. Alzire D. Hamel, Teacher  
Mrs. W. H. Moore, Co. Supt. of Schools

May 11, 1949

14 3rC Haugan

Haugan, Montana

Mrs. Lucille W. Cosgrove, Teacher  
Miss Sophie Loberg, Co. Supt. of Schools

May 12, 1949

15 3rD Rollins

Rollins, Montana

Mrs. L. G. Woodworth, Teacher  
Mr. J. B. Kiracofe, Co. Supt. of Schools  
Lake County, Polson, Montana

May 4, 1949

# THE PRIMARY READING TEST

## Grade One — Form B

By Albert G. Reilley, Principal of the Memorial School, Framingham, Massachusetts

### TEACHER'S MANUAL

**Purpose and Nature of the Test.** A satisfactory test or examination in first grade reading is an instrument which gives evidence of the degree to which pupils are reaching the objectives of reading at this level. One of the objectives consistently stressed throughout the reading program of the first grade is the ability to make accurate and adequate meaning for the words on the printed page. The three goals of first grade reading presented in the *Thirty-Sixth Yearbook* make this stress on meaning apparent:

- Ability to read with keen interest and *understanding* simple records of experience and simple printed booklets of the preprimer type.
- Ability to engage in *continuous meaningful reading* from simple books (such as those of primer difficulty).
- Ability to read books (of average first-reader difficulty) with keen interest and *absorption in content* and growth of interest in reading independently.<sup>1</sup> (Italics supplied by the author.)

The Primary Reading Test has been devised to determine the degree to which pupils in grade one have developed the ability to make adequate meaning for what they read. It may be used either at the end of the first grade or at the beginning of the second.

The test measures achievement in the four major phases of the development of reading with understanding: Word Recognition, Word Meaning, Sentence Meaning, and Paragraph Meaning. The total score will represent accurately the level of reading achievement and the part scores will indicate group strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the test may be used as an achievement or diagnostic instrument.

**Validity and Reliability.** The validity of this test has been carefully assured by the utilization of the following criteria. First, the vocabulary has been selected almost entirely from the first thousand words in "The Teacher's Word Book," by Thorndike. This list is accepted by reading authorities as the best, and, indeed, the only measure of permanent reading vocabulary. Further, approximately *ninety per cent* of the words used are in the Horn-Packer List. Table I shows the exact percentage of words used from each list in the four parts of the test.

Table I

PERCENTAGE OF WORDS USED IN THE PRIMARY READING TEST, FORM B  
FROM THE THORNDIKE AND HORN-PACKER WORD LISTS

	Part I Word Recognition	Part II Word Meaning	Part III Sentence Meaning	Part IV Paragraph Meaning
<i>Thorndike</i>				
First five hundred	78	65	81	77
Second five hundred	22	35	16	11
Above first thousand			3	12
<i>Horn-Packer</i>	89	87	95	90

Second, the concepts necessary to the exact understanding of the reading selections are all familiar to first grade pupils. Third, the mechanical set-up of the test is in accord with primary standards. The type for the sentences and paragraphs is 18 point and the lines in all paragraphs are four inches or less in length. Fourth, the reading content and the illustrations are both interesting and stimulating to first grade pupils. Fifth, and this is the most important criterion, all responses are of the *non-verbal* type. Too often the teaching and testing of reading tend to engender rather than prevent verbalism. This test uses a technique that entirely eliminates the use of verbal clues in responding to the test situation.

The reliability coefficient for this test is .943. This unusually high coefficient was determined by substituting the coefficient obtained by correlating the scores on the even-numbered items with the scores on the odd-numbered items in the Spearman-Brown formula.

**Scoring.** The scoring is entirely objective. Each exercise has only one correct response. Each correct response has a value of one. The total possible score on the entire test is 60. Part I has a possible score

of 20; Part II, a possible score of 20; Part III, a possible score of 10; and Part IV, a possible score of 10. When more than one response is made for any item, no credit is to be given. Teachers should give credit for responses that the pupil has not circled completely or exactly, provided it is clear that the correct response is the one intended, and when no other response has been circled for that particular item.

**Norms.** The norms for this test are based upon the returns from 1451 first grade pupils. Schools in fifteen states, selected so as to get a sampling from the major sections and types of communities in the United States, are represented in the norms given below. An inspection of the following norms will make it apparent that the test is easy enough for almost every pupil to work a large part of it without becoming discouraged. It will also be evident that it is difficult enough to measure the reading achievement of the brightest pupils.

Table II gives the important percentiles for the total scores obtained. It should be read as follows: 30 per cent of all the pupils who took the test received a score of 48.1 or better. Group achievement in reading can be evaluated by comparing your class median with the median given in Table II. A comparison of the median scores obtained on each part with those given in Table III will suggest which phases of reading need emphasis. Table IV is to be interpreted as follows: If a pupil obtains a total score of 33, his reading grade equivalent is equal to the fifth month of the first grade. That is, in the grade equivalent, the whole number stands for the grade, and the decimal fraction stands for the month in that school year.

Table II

IMPORTANT PERCENTILES OF TOTAL SCORES

5% equaled or exceeded	56.8
10% equaled or exceeded	54.2
20% equaled or exceeded	50.7
25% equaled or exceeded	49.3
30% equaled or exceeded	48.1
40% equaled or exceeded	45.7
50% equaled or exceeded	42.9 Median
60% equaled or exceeded	40.0
70% equaled or exceeded	36.3
75% equaled or exceeded	34.3
80% equaled or exceeded	31.5
90% equaled or exceeded	25.2
95% equaled or exceeded	18.2

Table IV

READING GRADE EQUIVALENTS  
Total Score Grade Equivalent

0	1.0
1-18	1.1
19-25	1.2
26-29	1.3
30-31	1.4
32-34	1.5
35-36	1.6
37-38	1.7
39-40	1.8
41	1.9
42	2.0
43-44	2.1
45	2.2
46	2.3
47-48	2.4
49	2.5
50	2.6
51-52	2.7
53-54	2.8
55-56	2.9
57-60	3.0

Table III

MEDIANS BY PARTS

Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV
17.5	14.5	8.2	4.6

**Remedial Suggestions.** Most pupils will do well on Word Recognition and Word Meaning and not so well on Sentence and Paragraph Meaning. Teachers will find also that most pupils will be able to read the sentences and paragraphs orally with facility. In other words, pupils will be more proficient in handling the mechanics of reading than they will be in making accurate meanings. This condition suggests that pupils and teachers have been more concerned in developing competence in recognizing the symbols of reading than in supplying the meaning which the symbols represent.

The following general suggestions will indicate major points of attack on this weakness.<sup>2</sup> First, pupils must be made to read for adequate and accurate meanings. Teachers must check eternally on the richness and

<sup>1</sup> William S. Gray, "The Nature and Organization of Basic Instruction in Reading" (Chapter IV in *The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook, Part I*, of the National Society for the Study of Education, Guy M. Whipple, Editor: Public School Publishing Company, 1937), pp. 91-95.

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see McKee, Paul, *Language in the Elementary School*, Revised Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), Chapter I. Also, Horn, E., *Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), Chapters IV and V.

accuracy of meaning obtained by their pupils. Verbal questioning alone will not suffice. Questioning must be supplemented by picture exercises such as those found in the Primary Reading Test and other forms of non-verbal response.

Second, to obtain adequate and accurate meanings, pupils must be able to sense the relationships between the words in a sentence and between the sentences in a paragraph. Language exercises in making good sentences and simple paragraphs will give pupils a better idea of the language relationships that exist between words and sentences. This, in turn, will enable the pupils to make more accurate meanings for the material they read.

### DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING

*Plan of Administration:* This test should be administered in two sittings: Do not attempt to give the entire test in one sitting.

First sitting — Part I and Part II

Second sitting — Part III and Part IV

*Time Allotment:* All pupils will finish Part I together. The teacher may dictate the words in Part I as fast as the pupils are ready. Enough time should be allowed on Parts II, III, and IV for approximately nine tenths of the class to finish.

*Caution:* Each part contains a trial exercise, and it is extremely important that these exercises be fully understood by all pupils before they are allowed to attempt the various sections of the test itself. Teachers should realize that this is a reading test and not a test of the pupils' ability to use the techniques employed. Therefore, all teachers should feel free to discuss each trial at length. They may even wish to write it on the board and have a general discussion of it, before proceeding with the test.

In order to test the reading ability of your pupils and to make the results reliable, all teachers must exercise great diligence in seeing to it that pupils do not compare responses. If space permits, it is best to seat pupils so they cannot see their neighbors' papers.

**FIRST SITTING:** (1) Before passing out the test booklets, say,

"Boys and girls, today we are going to play an interesting game with words and pictures. When you get your booklet, write your name, school, age, and grade in the blanks at the left of the page. (In Grade I, the teacher may fill out the blanks on the title-page herself.) When you have finished, put your pencil down so that I will know you are ready to play this new game. Do not open your booklets!"

(2) Pass out the booklets so that the title-page is up. When the blanks have been filled in, say,

"Now, we are ready to play the game. See if you can find 'baby' at the top of the page. Put your finger on 'baby.' (Show them where it is. Make sure every pupil has found 'baby.') There are three other words on the same line. (If there is any doubt as to which words are on the same line, the teacher should make this clear at the board.) Now, I want you to make a ball around the word 'bed.' (See that each pupil knows what he is supposed to do. Demonstrate on the board if necessary.)

"Now, look at the next line of words. Make a ball around the two words, 'for her.' (See that this is done correctly.) Are there any questions about how we are to play the first part of this game?" (Make certain that each pupil understands exactly what he is to do.)

(3) Then say,

"I am going to read one of the words on each line. I want you to make a ball around the word I say. Make only one ball on each line. (Then, pronounce the following words in order. Do not repeat words unless some extraneous noise has muffled your pronunciation.)

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. and   | 9. waves  |
| 2. how   | 10. right |
| 3. day   | 11. show  |
| 4. grass | 12. tail  |
| 5. eat   | 13. back  |
| 6. song  | 14. first |
| 7. clean | 15. kept  |
| 8. hear  | 16. foot  |

"Now, make a ball around the two words I say —

17. blown away
18. run slowly
19. cost more
20. every one

"Pencils down! Now turn to page 2 and fold it so that page 2 is up." (See that this is done.)

(4) When all pupils are ready, say,

"Here we have some interesting pictures. Look at the picture in the upper left-hand corner. This is a picture of what? A baby. Yes, that's right. Next to the picture are four words. One word goes with the picture. Find it. Now, make a ball around it. (See that all pupils understand exactly what to do.) You play the rest of this game the same way. Look at each picture, find the word that goes with the picture, and make a ball around it. Make a ball around only one word for each picture. Any questions about what you are to do? (Answer any reasonable questions.) Be sure to work all the exercises on this page. If you come to one you don't know, skip it and try the next. Do not turn your booklet over. Put your pencil down when you finish this page. All right! Go ahead."

(5) When about 90% of the class have finished, have the booklets collected. Tell the pupils they will finish playing the game later.

**SECOND SITTING:** (1) Before passing out the test booklets, say, "Boys and girls, we are now going to finish the word and picture game we started yesterday (or this morning). When you get your booklet, I want you to open it to page 3." (See that pupils find the correct page.)

(2) Then, say,

"At the top of the page, there is a sentence. Who can tell me what it says? (Let someone read it to you, making sure that all pupils are looking at the right place.) Yes! that's right. Under the sentence, there are four pictures. Which picture tells the story in the sentence? Put your finger on it. How do you know that the first picture goes with the sentence? (Allow any necessary discussion on this point.) That's right! Put a big cross right on that picture. That is how we play this game. Read the sentence and put a big cross on the picture that tells the story in the sentence. Do not mark more than one picture for each sentence. Are there any questions on what you are to do?"

(3) After answering any reasonable questions, say,

"There are four sentences on this page and six on the next page. When you finish those on this page, go right on to page 4. Stop at the bottom of page 4. (Show pupils how far they are to go.) All right! Go ahead."

(4) When about 90% of the class have finished Part III, say,

"Stop! Now turn to page 5. Here we have a story and four pictures. Who can read this little story for me? That is fine. Now, which picture tells the story you have just read? (Allow ample discussion on this point.) Make a big cross on the right picture. The rest of the game is played just like this. You are to read the story and make a cross on the picture that tells the story you have just read. Do not mark more than one picture for each story. Are there any questions?" (Answer any reasonable questions.)

(5) Then, say,

"There are ten stories. They are on pages 5, 6, 7, and 8. You are to read all of them. When you have read all the stories and marked the pictures on this page, go right on to the next and so on until you have done them all. If you come to one you can't read, skip it and do the next."

(6) Watch to see that the pupils work *all* of the exercises.

(7) When about 90% of the pupils have finished, say "Stop!" and collect the papers.

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